

# LEMON VERBENA

# OTHER ESSAYS

BY  
E. V. LUCAS

VISIBILITY GOOD  
FRENCH LEAVES  
TRAVELLER'S LUCK  
TURNING THINGS OVER  
A ROVER I WOULD BE  
A FRONDED ISLE  
EVENTS AND EMBROIDERIES  
ZIGZAGS IN FRANCE  
ENCOUNTERS AND DIVERSIONS  
LUCK OF THE YEAR  
GIVING AND RECEIVING  
A BOSWELL OF BAGHDAD  
'TWIXT EAGLE AND DOVE  
THE PHANTOM JOURNAL  
LOITERER'S HARVEST  
CLOUD AND SILVER  
ONE DAY AND ANOTHER  
FIRESIDE AND SUNSHINE  
CHARACTER AND COMEDY  
OLD LAMPS FOR NEW

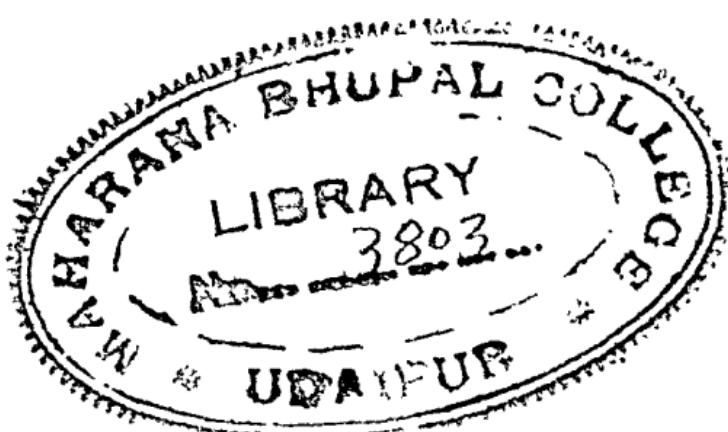


Randal Norris  
1751-1827

The New-York Historical Society

LEMON VERBENA  
AND  
OTHER ESSAYS

BY  
E. V. LUCAS



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RANDAL NORRIS. From a Miniature by Matilda Betham. Reproduced  
by kind permission of Mr. Bernard Richardson . . . . . *Frontispiece*  
MARY AND CHARLES LAMB. From the fresco by Edward Armitage, R.A.,  
in University Hall, London . . . . . *Facing page 178*

## LEMON VERBENA

THE scents of most flowers have their definite associations, but one has sometimes to smell them afresh to know what these are. There can be surprises. Thus, it was not until the other day, when I picked a leaf of lemon verbena in a hot-house and crushed it in my hand, that I found that the first thing that this sweetly pungent or pungently sweet and least material of perfumes now did was to bring back to my mind a French auction. Yet, if ever there were two irreconcilables, one would guess them to be a French auction and a lemon-verbena leaf. But in my sensorium they appear to be united.

Among the things that are not better managed in France I should—if I dared to generalize from particulars—include sales by auction. This one at any rate began in a muddle that threatened to become a disaster. It was held in a villa on the Riviera on a Sunday afternoon, and was advertised to start at two o'clock. At two o'clock the *salon* in which the proceedings were to occur was filled to its utmost capacity, the hall was a surging mass of new-comers, and the auctioneer had not

arrived. It is the habit of people who attend sales wherever sales are held, all over the world, to bring a certain amount of jocularity with them; but there was a double supply of it on the occasion which the verbena leaf has re-created for me, because the house and effects were those of a notorious swindler and the day being Sunday it found us in holiday mood. But the jokes were not novel. Even in witty France, I learned, there is an irresistible impulse for the humorist when crushed to refer to sardines. A big man next to me employed the simile again and again at regular intervals, and was always rewarded by laughs: not merely the servile brand as supplied by his wife, but general honest chuckles.

Did I say he was a big man, this humorist? He was more than big. It is odd how any headway was ever made by the superstition that Frenchmen are small. They may sometimes be short, but they are never small; and when they are big they are enormous. They also wear a special kind of overcoat which increases their bulk, not merely by its own capaciousness, but by reason of pockets that bulge. Had this sale been held in summer instead of in the depth of winter (with the sharpest contrast of heat in the sun and perishing cold out of it) twice as many people could have got into the house.

Suddenly we were set in motion—at least, our bodies and shoulders were—by an arriving impact.

A very tall man was attempting to force his way through us to reach the *salon*, which presumably had no other inlet: nothing but the windows to the loggia, high above the garden with its oranges and lemons and splashes of bougainvillea, and higher still above the blue Mediterranean Sea. Such an incursion was naturally to be resented, and by stiffening and solidifying we resisted it. But it was no use: this was the auctioneer, the *huissier*, with his clerks behind him, and as without him there would be no sale, we had to relent and let him through; but even with consent it was a brusque and tedious progress, accomplished to a running commentary of gibes and suggestions, of which one—to the effect that he should transfer the sale to the garden—seemed to me so sensible that it must have effect. For a while, however, the auctioneer, having gained his table, was stubborn; but when he realized that not only could most of the people see nothing, but that many of the most likely bidders, including some influential and irritated and very vocal dealers, were excluded and could never hope to compete, he came to reason and we all trooped out.

I can never think of the Riviera as real. It is like the scenery of a play or the fabric of a dream. Nor is it real; for in life itself one is not surrounded continually by courteous and thoughtful servitors eager to anticipate and fulfil one's every desire; in life itself the sun does not

## THE RIVIERA

shine every day in mid-winter; in life itself it is possible to speak to a Frenchman in French and be answered in the same language; in life itself—at least, in the life as led by me in my own country—when summer goes, leaves fall and flowers cease to bloom. It is perhaps its vegetation that most emphasizes the Riviera's unreality: the palms, the mimosas, the bamboos, the maritime pines, the aloes, and, above all, the various forms of cactus. There is one cactus in particular—a sprawling, fence-like series of pale-green discs or rounded slabs, armed with spikes, often cracked and usually sprinkled with dust—which makes me rub my eyes whenever I see it, so incredibly foreign is it, so infinitely farther away from London ought it to be than one night in the train. This cactus, although you find it all along the southern French coast, obviously belongs to the other side of the way—to Africa—for it always carries with it the suggestion of camels.

After the preliminaries were at last settled, and the auctioneer had informed us that, by law, he was entitled to a commission of fifteen per cent. on the takings, the sale proceeded very much as in England. That is to say, a great deal of rubbish which ought to have been burned changed hands and began a new period of existence; some day, I suppose, when its new owners' race is run, again to be put up and sold, again to begin

a new period of existence; and so on to infinity. There was a very inferior metal and lacquer Buddha, for instance, which was bought by a resident in the place and would, I felt sure, never leave the neighbourhood. The triumphant bidder who secured this deity paid for it on the spot and held it in his arms for the rest of the afternoon; but other buyers gave their names, and there was just the same difficulty in hearing them and their addresses, and just the same indecision now and then over the maker of the last bid, as we are accustomed to at home. The sale resembled all others also in its profusion of articles with which I could gladly do without. French taste is rarely mine, and even if a collector's *articles de virtu* were being dispersed I should probably be little tempted; but the swindler who owned this house had entertained for florid and ornate furniture and oddments a preference which filled me with disgust. The crowning moment of the sale came when the auctioneer raised above his head, for all to see, a large Oriental vase—‘superbe’, ‘magnifique’, ‘unique’—and it fell to pieces in his hands. No joke in a revue ever went better than that; and, indeed, one of our frugal dramatists might almost write a sketch around it.

And what, you very naturally ask, has all this to do with the scent of lemon verbena? Just this—that when the company moved into the

garden and I hastened to secure a place in the sun sheltered from the wind and not too far from the auctioneer, I was conscious, after a minute or so, of a familiar and gracious aroma, and found that my back was leaning against a trellis on which a lemon verbena was growing. Thus with every bid, every incident, every quip, every tap of the falling hammer, was mingled the fragrance of this delicate and delicious herb. I would as soon that it conjured up a different scene; but in this matter of association we cannot control, we can only accept.

## THREE VICTORIANS

(WITH AN INTERLUDE ON DIABOLICAL  
INTERVENTION)

THE second-hand bookseller's catalogue which lies before me presses three of memory's buttons. How? By including items under the names of Alfred Crowquill, Arthur Sketchley, and Harrison Weir, each of these being associated with books which I read in the 1870's. Not one of the three have I thought of for many, many years, although I find that it was in a house at Appledore, a village on the edge of Romney Marsh through which I used frequently to pass, that Harrison Weir spent the evening of his life.

'Illustrated by Harrison Weir' was a sentence with which I became familiar as soon as I could read. Chiefly drawings of animals: benevolent horses, intelligent fowls, benign dogs. From the notice in the *Dictionary of National Biography* I find that this modest but very capable artist was the originator, in this country, of the coloured sup-

plement. He was a member of the staff of the *Illustrated London News* from its birth in 1842, as draughtsman and engraver, and a picture by him of a robin, entitled 'The Christmas Carol Singer', was the first coloured plate to be given away with any English paper. That should be honour enough, but he was also the founder, in 1872, of the Cat Show, and an authority, with pen and pencil, on that mysterious, detached creature. Another artist, Mr. Louis Wain, was to become more closely associated with the cat, but Harrison Weir's presentation of it was nearer life, although never so captivating as Henriette Ronner's. A further activity was the designing of the gold cups for Ascot, Goodwood, and other meetings, which he did for over thirty years. A Lewes man by birth, Harrison Weir was apprenticed to another Lewes man, George Baxter, famous for prints which misguided people collect. His first wife was the daughter of J. F. Herring, the painter of horses.

Alfred Crowquill, volumes of whose fairy-tales we also had, was older than Harrison Weir, and he died in 1872, just before I was beginning to take notice. Nursery books, a class to which so many of his belonged, are apt quickly to be defaced and destroyed, and I do not suppose that there are many of Crowquill's to be met with now; but I can remember several which he embellished, among them *Aunt Mavor's Nursery Tales*, Nelson's

*Picture Books for the Nursery, Fairy Tales by Cuthbert Bede, The Marvellous Adventures of Master Tyll Owlglass, Fairy Footsteps, The Boys and the Giants, and Dick-Do-Little, the Idle Sparrow.* (Do-Little has become a medical man to-day.) Crowquill's line was free and fluent, and his invention droll enough, and some of these books were of his own writing as well. The pseudonym, 'Alfred Crowquill', was first used by two brothers in conjunction: Charles Robert Forrester, who wrote, and Alfred Henry Forrester, who drew. But after 1843, when the elder brother retired, A. H. Forrester took to himself the name Alfred Crowquill, and never changed it: He was for a while on *Punch* but, like Harrison Weir, joined the *Illustrated London News*, and was a tower of strength there.

One of Crowquill's own stories reminds one that there are few boys with a passion for games, or for one game above all others, who have not at times wished for some supernatural assistance to help them to astonishing mastery. What would they not give to be able to make a hundred every innings, or at any rate never to get out except at their own chosen time; to do what they liked with a racket; to be irresistible a scentre-forward? It is more than likely that petitions to this effect have found their way into their prayers; certainly candles have been lighted to such ends. A little later in life these ambitions may be transferred to

success at billiards, and even to cards or racing, although it is of skill rather than mere luck that I am now thinking.

I have mentioned prayer, but there is another and very different short cut which, in fiction at any rate, has been tried: a bargain with the Evil One. The Faust legend is on a higher plane; but it could be adapted to domestic needs, and considering the domination of games and the thoughtlessness of youth, I cannot think it impossible that diabolical aid may not still be invoked. Can it be so? The Nawab of Pataudi had a very odd spell of success in 1931, didn't he? And has Lindrum's skill been fully accounted for? While is it not on record that the wife of Lord Stair, the eminent Scots judge (known to her foes as the Witch of Endor), arranged with Sir Patrick Murray, an M.P. and assiduous golfer, that if he would vote as she desired, she would obtain for him on the links the help of the Devil; and redeemed her promise?

Next to games comes proficiency in the arts; and at once we think of musicians, for music is a kind of magic. How simple—almost, indeed, how natural—for the young violinist, consumed by ambition, to trade his soul to a sympathetic stranger for perfection of execution. A soul is so intangible; the production of melody and its influence on our hearers can be so desirable and real. The young pianist might also be fortified in this

way, but it is the violinist of whom we think first. The Svengali type. There is peculiarly adaptable material for the wily Tempter in the fiddle and the bow. The pianist fixed to his seat at his unwieldy static instrument suggests no sulphurous alliance; but the fiddler, moving, swaying, walking, now rising to his full height to command, now stooping to wheedle, with his arm now flogging, now caressing, and the strings uttering every note from triumph and joy to anguish and despair—the fiddler could easily be the Devil's own.

The story leading to these reflections tells how a cricketer made a pact with the Devil, so that in exchange for his soul, which the Evil One had some curious and not understandable desire to possess—for it could not have been worth much—he received an unbeatable bat. Hitherto he had been the meanest most ignominious of 'rabbits', but now he was able to hit everything for four or six. Not by his own skill: he admits that; but by force of the two invisible hands which he felt gripping the bat over his own. A very unsatisfactory proceeding. He could not be dislodged until these hands were removed and the Devil himself—most irregularly, for he was not playing in the match—went on to bowl. It is a poor story, and ends in that most depressing of all devices—by the narrator's waking up; but it is interesting as being perhaps the earliest example of the craving for supernatural aid in games that literature

affords. I can remember two excellent later examples, one by Richard Marsh and one in a story called 'The Demon Leg', by an anonymous writer in *Blackwood* for May 1894, whom I have since identified as Lord Welwood, afterwards Lord Moncreiff.

Alfred Crowquill was not so grotesque as Cruikshank, nor so direct as 'Bab', nor so domestic as Thackeray in *The Rose and the Ring*, but he had a gay way, as his illustrations to Bon Gaultier prove. Like so many Victorians, he was too fluent, the result either of the abundance that marked the period or of a want of rigorous self-criticism. What he lacked, and, indeed, what all the illustrators of the sixties and early seventies lacked, was charm—the charm that came in with Randolph Caldecott and Kate Greenaway. Caldecott swept all his predecessors away. There was nothing like his buoyant, high-spirited, liquid line and his native fun; nor, among illustrators for children, has there been since. Walter Crane had his youthful public, but he was always rather formal and anything but a jester.

The third item in the catalogue brings us to one whose fame is now completely forgotten—the author of the 'Mrs. Brown' books, the first of which that I can recall being *Mrs. Brown at Brighton*, 1875, a work which naturally found its way to my household, for it was in that town that we lived. Mrs. Brown was a voluble middle-

class Victorian matron in a bonnet, who had views on everything that was happening, and uttered them in an unbroken stream: more urbane and less self-righteous than her predecessor Mrs. Caudle, but owing something to that elderly vixen. The next thing of the kind was the incomparable Mr. Dooley, of the Archey Road, who lifted commentary to a higher plane and was capable of brilliant intuitions; but Mrs. Brown had a devoted following. How she would strike one now I can only conjecture, for I have no intention of buying the forty-five volumes of her series which my bookseller offers for three guineas, with a supplementary collection of sixty-two uncollected papers, two autograph letters, and a portrait of the author, thrown in. To give an idea of the range of this versatile and caustic lady's interests, I may say that among the titles are Mrs. Brown on the Alabama Claims, on the Tichborne Case, on the Shah's visit, on Home Rule, on Disraeli, on Cleopatra's Needle, on the new Liquor Law, and on Co-operative Stores, then a new invention.

Mrs. Brown's creator, George Rose, had a curious career. He was born in 1827 and, after serving for a while as a clerk in the Custom House, decided to become a clergyman, at the age of twenty-four entering Magdalen Hall as a commoner. In 1848 he was ordained, and later became curate at Camberwell, where he was noted for sermons that had the double and infrequent

merit of being practical and short. In 1851 he became assistant Reader at the Temple and coached pupils for the army; but the Oxford movement shaking his faith in the Established Church, he went over to Rome in 1855, and three years later became tutor to the young Earl of Arundel who, in 1860, became fifteenth Duke of Norfolk. When his pupil had outgrown his services, George Rose, no longer a reverend, took to writing, both for the Press and for the stage, and, under the pseudonym Arthur Sketchley, had a wide vogue. Later in life he travelled in America, and wrote an account of his impressions, entitled *The Great Country*, 1868, which I should like to see. He then gave very successful readings from Mrs. Brown, in England and all over the world, and died in 1882.

Mr. William Farren, the actor, and member of a famous stage family, who knew George Rose well, tells me that there never was 'a more kindly man or a more complete gentleman in the truest sense of the word'. Another of Rose's friends, Mr. Hamilton Ross, tells me that he was in appearance Falstaffian, with the genial aspect and rich unctuous voice which, as well as corpulency, we associate with Shakespeare's naughtiest creation. A link between George Rose and our own day is Mr. Francis Barraud, the artist, who was his nephew. It may not be generally known that Mr. Barraud is the painter of what is probably

the best-known modern English picture, not merely in England but all over the world: 'His Master's Voice'.

To return to Mrs. Brown, it is rather odd that the loquacious and sagacious monologist has been allowed to die out, for there is no more useful vehicle for satire. I can think at the moment of no representative of her class of commentator except Mr. Garland's 'Sergeant Murphy'. The sublime Dooley, alas! is dumb.

## RENEWED WISBERRY

GLANCING the other day at a French newspaper, I was struck by the variety of ways in which births are announced. In England, we say, on such and such a date, at such and such an address, to the wife of So-and-so, a son or a daughter, or even both. But the French are more fanciful. In the paper before me there are four different modes of imparting the glad tidings. In one, the father and mother are happy to make public the birth of their daughter, Jacqueline; in the second, Mme So-and-so has put into the world a daughter, Jacqueline; in the third, Mme So-and-so has given the day—that is to say, daylight—to a daughter, Chantal; and in the fourth, which I like best, Claude, Bernard, Manique, Ginette, and Nicole So-and-so have the joy to announce collectively the birth of their little sister, also a Chantal.

You see that the French parents differ from us not only in the more varied phraseology of the announcement but in having made up their minds so early as to what the child is to be called. In

England we wait for the event. Since children are of two sexes and no man of science, not even a German, has yet been able to arrange for a choice to be made in advance, it follows that in all the preliminary discussion between those French fathers and mothers, not improbably in the presence of the *belles mères* and the *beaux pères*, two names, one for a boy and one for a girl, have had to come under consideration. I should like to be present at such a debate and listen to the suggestions and refusals, the amendments and compromises. At the moment, if the paper I have been consulting is to be taken as evidence, more girls than boys are being put into the world, and Jacqueline and Chantal are the most popular names. Chantal I think very charming; but where it comes from I have no notion, unless from the Baronne de Chantal, the pious associate of St. Francis of Sales, and founder with him of the Order of the Visitation, whose monastery you see at Annecy: La Mère Chantal, grandmother, as it was to happen, of Mme de Sévigné.

No doubt many an English parent has fixed ideas on what the name of the forthcoming infant shall be, alternatives again having been chosen; but I suppose that in the majority of families the real business does not begin until the mother and child are definitely doing well. It has even been suggested that the choice of a name shall be left entirely to its owner, not to be settled until years

of discretion have been reached, with a substitute *nom-de-guerre* in use in the meantime; but I have never met with a case, except, of course, those names that are added at confirmation. This may be due either to the demands of clergymen at the font and registrars in their offices, or to a doubt as to whether years of discretion ever arrive. But there is sense in it; for so many persons, men and women alike, must grow to dislike their names and wish for others. Now and then a bold man, such as Mr. Sickert, who once was Walter, but now is Richard, takes another; but most of us sit down under the disability. There is even, in America, a writer named Preserved Smith.

America, however, had better be left out of this inquiry, for over there anything can happen, as you have but to read the names of the people who are responsible for the films, in every department, to realize. At the moment most of them seem to be called Earl. How come? as they say. Is it republicanism and democracy in revolt?

The Chinese are unusually thorough in the matter of names to measure. A Chinaman when born is given a name for the purposes of identification and communication. When he comes of age he is given another; when he marries he is given another; if he distinguishes himself he is given another, and when he dies he has still one more by which all men may remember him.

Most people correspond to their names. The

Johns are Johns, or even Honest Johns; the Williams are Williams; the Noels are Noels; the Sacheverells—but there cannot be many of them—Sacheverells. If you would test the inadvisability of changing names, throw your mind back to that bluff Lincolnshire squire who won the Derby with Hermit—the late Henry Chaplin—and then reflect upon the chief characteristics of the great movie comedian who recently assisted the film 'City Lights' to steal not exactly unaware into the public consciousness. How wrong if the comedian had been called Henry and the Tory landowner Charlie! It is not merely because we are accustomed to the conjunction of the Christian name and surname of prominent persons that we think them appropriate; they are appropriate. The distinctions may be fine, but they exist. Edgar Wallace is a case in point. His real name, the name used by his intimates, was Richard; but on title-pages how much more telling was Edgar! Sir Richard Wallace for an art collector, yes; but Edgar Wallace as an author of thrillers. And who would walk across the street to buy a ticket to see the hero of Edgar Wallace's last play if that actor were named Sir Thomas du Maurier?

I have lately chanced upon a list of honest fellows empanelled upon a jury in East Sussex in the Puritan days, when, I suppose, men did select their own names. No doubt there were at that

time Preserved Smiths, whose parents chose that style for them; but I imagine that it was Barebones himself who decided that Praise-God was, as a Christian name, superior to, say, James or Stephen. Can he have been thus baptized? It is, of course, possible; but a certain arrogance that goes with self-conscious rectitude leads me to believe that these strange appellations proceeded from the adult complacency of their owners. But here are my East Sussex jurymen: Fight-the-Good-Fight-of-Faith White of Ewhurst, Redeemed Compton of Battle, Weep-not Billing of Lewes, Called Lower of Warbleton, Elected Mitchell of Heathfield, Peace-of-God Knight of Burwash, Kill-Sin Pemble of Withyham, Stand-fast-on-high Stringer of Crowhurst, and—my own favourites—More-Fruit Fowler of East Hoathly, and Renewed Wisberry of Hailsham.

Having accepted the fact that these names really existed, and that men answered to them, the questions arise: What were their nicknames? What did their friends call them? These problems form one of the reasons why I cannot believe that such names dated from infancy, because the parents—at any rate the fathers—would foresee so much trouble at school. No man who, as a boy, had gone through agonies attendant upon such a name as Fight-the-Good-Fight-of-Faith, would confer a similar handicap on his son; although the son might, in his mature pride of

virtue, take it himself. As a Christian name, the feeblest of this lot is Called. How can you deal with such a name as that? How, in short, could he, by merely mundane voices, be called? 'Hi, Called!' 'Come here, Called!' Who could have shouted that? But More-Fruit Fowler would instantly have been transformed to Fruity by his East Hoathly companions, and Weep-not Billing would in Lewes have been known, by the rule of contraries, as Blubber.

I have no conjectures as to the rest, and so merely record my sense of satisfaction that this variety of nomenclature is over. A point worth noting is that the efforts of obscure villagers were by no means inferior to those of the practised men-of-letters. Beaumont and Fletcher's Hope-on-High Bomby and Sir Walter Scott's Corporal Grace-be-here Humgudgeon (in *Woodstock*) are, although conscious works of comic art, no funnier than Renewed Wisberry and More-Fruit Fowler. Personally, if I came under some moving convulsion of the spirit and felt it my duty to take a descriptive appellation, I should choose Renewed. It is what one is always hoping for—for renewal.

## AN APPEAL

I FOUND the name of M. Dutruel in that admirable handbook to exhilarating country, Muirhead's *Blue Guide to the French Alps*. It occurs in the description of excursions from Evian. 'The chief ascent from Evian', says Mr. Muirhead, 'is that of the Dent d'Oche (7,300 feet). . . . The night should be spent in the C.A.F. refuge in order to see the sunrise (key kept by M. Dutruel at Bernex-Trossy).'

That's the man we want, the man who keeps the key of the sunrise. That's the man we were missing all through the alleged summer of 1931: the man who (would he unlock it) could have changed our woe to joy, cheered our spirits, warmed our hands and hearts and made us a little more ready for National Service.

I will not recapitulate our miseries, disappointments, frustrations, chills and lumbagos, battered flower-beds, wet feet, submerged pitches. They are too wretchedly fresh in all our memories; the newspaper headings, 'No play in five county matches yesterday', are engraved on the tablets

of the mind. I will merely say that such a summer must not occur again. Steps must be taken to prevent it, and the first step is to secure the services of the man who has the key of the sunrise, M. Dutruel.

Had I made this excursion from Evian I would have reasoned with M. Dutruel myself. But I did not; I merely noted it as I was looking through the book. I therefore have no idea what manner of benefactor he is, old or young, amenable or wilful, jovial or ascetic, generous or grudging. All I know is that he is the custodian of the key of the sunrise, and we absolutely must get him here each year in time for the cricket season.

In the hope of persuading him to lend us his invaluable aid I have dropped into verse. Music hath charms. This is the kind of thing that ought to be sent to him some time in the early spring, so that he can make his plans:

IRREGULAR, BUT VERY NECESSARY, ODE

TO

M. DUTRUEL OF BERNEX-TROSSY

O Monsieur DUTRUEL,  
We'd love you well  
If you would tear yourself from Bernex-Trossy  
As soon as possy,  
And bring your key to us who need it so.  
For all our hopes are low.  
After the doing that we had last year  
We shrink with fear

## AN ODE

And hardly dare to lift our eyes  
 To scan the treacherous skies.  
 But weather doesn't matter over there  
 On your high spot  
 Where games are not,  
 At least such games as we pursue  
 At Wimbledon and Lord's, and Aldershot,  
 The haunt of the Tattoo.

No cricket grounds have you where batsmen score  
 For County, England or for LEVESON-GOWER,  
 Where DULEEPSINHJI makes the frequent four,  
 And HERBERT SUTCLIFFE all a rainless day  
 Can keep the ball at bay.  
 Nor have you any village green  
 (On which, of course, the finest games are seen).

You don't, in fact, require the sun at all:  
 For trippers who, with rucksack on the back,  
 The Tooth of Oche attack  
 And upwards crawl  
 Have little hopes of anything but mist;  
 But we, poor souls, we simply can't exist  
 Without some genial beams, some glow, some heat  
 To thaw our marrows and make living sweet—  
 Particularly since the need for more economy  
 Completely routed all our native *bonhomie*.

So come, dear DUTRUEL, across our narrow sea  
 And bring with you the key  
 That sets Apollo free—  
 The blessed key  
 That bids the sunshine be.

We'll try to make our isle a Home from Home  
 Where'er you roam,

And keep nostalgic thoughts of Bernex-Trossy  
As far away as possy.

We have no Oche to bare its lofty teeth,  
But Hampstead Heath

Is at your service; also Primrose Hill.  
Say, then, you will.

O Monsieur DUTRUEL, the enemy of rain,  
Say then you will, and make us glad again.

## A SYMPHONY IN GREEN

HAVING found my first snowdrop of the year, I did what I always do with that flower of promise: I held it above my head to look within at its green lines, and again to marvel at the beauty of it—a beauty so often ignored, for the snowdrop usually is at our feet with only its drooping whiteness visible. But in particular was I struck once more by the quality of the green of these lines, which is like no other variety of that colour; but then, thinking about as many of those other varieties as I could, I realized that each of them has its individual character and is like no other, and that green is inexhaustible. There must be shades of it by the million.

Green is indeed the dominating colour of the world, for there is more vegetation than desert or blue sky, and the sea is often green enough to sway the balance. No sooner does one leave the town than green controls the landscape, and even in London there are no streets where, in the leafy months, green is not visible, not even in what is called ‘the city’ itself. Left to her-

self, Nature imposes a touch of green everywhere, even if it is only green mould or verdigris.

Annihilating all things made  
To a green thought is a green shade.

I have seen the theory stated that the world is mostly green because that is the best colour for our eyes; but it could never be proved, and there is nothing about it in Genesis. The only way of testing it would be to dye the grass different colours in different localities and engage an oculist to watch the children brought up there. There are rebels who want the grass to be red; but I have the feeling that green is right. When the *Westminster Gazette*, which, of an evening, I still continually miss, was started, it was printed on green paper entirely for the sake of the readers' sight. Now and then a book with green pages has been published to the same end; but whether we are in danger of blindness or impaired vision because most paper is white, I have never heard. Yet green is not universally accepted as a soothing hue, for I remember that when, many years ago, a new pavement was laid beside the lawns at Hove and people complained of being dazzled by it—in fact, it became known as Ophthalmia Walk—a pink wash was applied. Not green.

That everything should be called green—the range extending from the green of cooked spinach to the lines in the heart of a snowdrop—is another

proof of the poverty of our language or the laziness of man. Long since, the artists in words, the Paters and Wildes and Stevensons and Vernon Lees, should have subdivided green into a thousand new terms. In default of this analysis, we are driven back on such weak compromises as light green, dark green, sea green, pea green, emerald green. But what does 'light green' mean, when there are so many shades, including the infant shamrock and unripe apple and the sheaths from which the lily-of-the-valley miraculously and intoxicatingly emerges; or dark green, when there are maritime pines and Scotch firs and hollies? As for emerald green, there is no such hue. The green of the emerald is not colour, it is lambency, and never again, outside that radiant stone, will it be found. Nor is the green of dogs' eyes and cats' eyes and rabbits' eyes as reflected from a motorist's headlamps at night a colour. That, too, is lambency, fierce and sudden. No painter could translate either into pigment.

It was always an excitement in the early days when we were all artists—before some of us gave up the attempt in despair, leaving only the elect in—to find that our water-colour boxes omitted green altogether, so that we had to make it for ourselves. And since most of our pictures had grass as well as sky, green was as important as blue. Blue, however, no mixture of colours could make. There were occasionally green

cakes of a very unsatisfactory hue which became dull directly it was transferred to paper; but usually we had to combine gamboge and ultramarine or chrome yellow and indigo, according as we wished for a light or dark variety. I rather think that whenever a green cake did happen to be supplied, it was called either verdant green, emerald green, or green bice, and we were warned against putting the brush in our mouths when we were using it, as it was a deadly poison. I forget the taste; but I have the liveliest recollections of the sweetness, and general attractiveness to the palate, of either madder brown or crimson lake, or both.

There may have been a sound reason for omitting green from the paint-boxes of those times, for I find Millais (who rejoiced in the colour, and in his picture of the nuns in the garden makes it intensely sombre, and in his '*Ophelia*' employs myriad shades of it) stating in a letter: 'There are many nowadays will not have a picture with green in it, and even buyers who, when giving a commission to an artist, will stipulate that the canvas shall contain none of it. But God Almighty gave us green, and, depend upon it, it's a fine colour'.

What are the most beautiful shades of green? Each, I suppose. There is the green of the shallow sea over patches of sand as seen from a height: such as you have from the garden of

the Eden Hotel at Cap d'Ail, for instance; or, crossing the Channel in an aeroplane, as you approach the French coast towards Le Touquet. This is a sparkling translucent green, as different as can be from the green of malachite, which is sullen and opaque. There is the green of the young beech-leaves, so tender and limpid, and the green of old ivy, dark and austere. There is the green of the railings and shutters at Zaandam in Holland, and the green of aquarium tanks. There is the Lincoln green of Robin Hood's jerkin and the green of the yew. There is the gossamer green of the olives among the rocks and the opaque green of seaweed. There is the shimmering green of the alder and the mature and satisfying green of an old shagreen case. There is the silver green of the whitebeam in a wind and the sinister green of a cypress guarding the tombs. There is the green of the tree-frog and the green of Culpeper Houses; there is the green of the bud of Daphne emerging amid the pink of the blossoms and the green of the Brazilian flag. There is the wistful green of a Corot and the inflexible green of a Cézanne. There is the green of the early larch and the green of the new Tennyson volumes as I remember them in my youth. There is the green of *crème de menthe* and the green of the billiard-table; there is the green of Famille Verte porcelain and the green of the front door of No. 6 Cheyne Walk.

## THE LAST TO CALL HIM CHARLEY

FORTUNATE circumstances having just put me in possession of a photograph of the miniature portrait of Lamb's friend Randal Norris, I am eager that others should see it too, for there can be no member of that vanished circle in and about the Temple who is nearer our hearts than the kindly 'R. N.' of the essay entitled 'A Death-Bed' in the first edition of the second *Elia* volume. Hence a reproduction forms the frontispiece to this book.

Our first definite glimpse of Randal Norris, who was Sub-Treasurer and Librarian of the Inner Temple for many years before his death in 1827, is in the postscript to the essay on 'The Old Benchers of the Inner Temple', written in 1821, where Lamb says that he went to him—to R. N.—for information about Samuel Salt, who, it will be remembered, was the employer of Lamb's father. But it is more than probable—in fact, I think, certain—that the 'Mr. Norris of Christ's Hospital' who, after the tragedy in the Lamb household in 1796, was, in Lamb's

words, 'as a father to me', was this same worthy man. In 1796 he was forty-five, having been born in 1751, and we know that he had known Lamb from childhood, for in 'A Death-Bed' it is so stated: 'he was my friend and my father's friend for all the life that I can remember. . . . He was the last link that bound me to the Temple'. I have not been able to trace Randal Norris to Christ's Hospital, where it is, I hope, superfluous to state that Charles Lamb was at school, but, when fortified by Lamb's remark about Norris in a letter to Wordsworth in 1830—he was 'sixty years ours and our father's friend'—it is reasonable enough to assume that he may have had an official post there before he went to serve the lawyers.

The passage in the piteous letter of 1796 continues: 'Mrs. Norris as a mother; though we had few claims on them'. But as for 'claims', it would be enough for the Norrises that Mrs. Norris had been brought up at Widford and knew there Lamb's maternal grandmother, Mrs. Field.

I have referred to 'A Death-Bed', but since that was but a reproduction of the famous and beautiful letter to Crabb Robinson on January 20th, 1827, with the names altered, let me refresh memories by quoting the letter rather than the essay:

DEAR ROBINSON,—

I called upon you this morning, and found that you were gone to visit a dying friend. I had been upon a like errand. Poor Norris has been lying dying for now almost a week, such is the penalty we pay for having enjoyed a strong constitution! Whether he knew me or not, I know not, or whether he saw me through his poor glazed eyes; but the group I saw about him I shall not forget. Upon the bed, or about it, were assembled his wife and two daughters, and poor deaf Richard, his son, looking doubly stupefied. There they were, and seemed to have been sitting all the week. I could only reach out a hand to Mrs. Norris. Speaking was impossible in that mute chamber. By this time I hope it is all over with him.

In him I have a loss the world cannot make up. He was my friend and my father's friend all the life I can remember. I seem to have made foolish friendships ever since. Those are friendships which outlive a second generation. Old as I am waxing, in his eyes I was still the child he first knew me.<sup>1</sup> To the last he called me Charley. I have none to call me Charley now. He was the last link that bound me to the Temple. You are but of yesterday. In him seem to have died the old plainness of manners and singleness of heart. Letters he

<sup>1</sup> Lamb was then nearing fifty-two.

knew nothing of, nor did his reading extend beyond the pages of the *Gentleman's Magazine*. Yet there was a pride of literature about him from being amongst books (he was librarian), and from some scraps of doubtful Latin which he had picked up in his office of entering students, that gave him very diverting airs of pedantry. Can I forget the erudite look with which, when he had been in vain trying to make out a black-letter text of Chaucer in the Temple Library, he laid it down and told me that—‘in those old books, Charley, there is sometimes a deal of indifferent spelling’; and seemed to console himself in the reflection!

His jokes, for he had his jokes, are now ended, but they were old trusty perennials, staples that pleased after *decies repetita*, and were always as good as new. One song he had, which was reserved for the night of Christmas-day, which we always spent in the Temple. It was an old thing, and spoke of the flat bottoms of our foes and the possibility of their coming over in darkness, and alluded to threats of an invasion many years blown over; and when he came to the part

‘We'll still make 'em run, and we'll still make 'em sweat,  
In spite of the devil and Brussels Gazette!’

his eyes would sparkle as with the freshness of an impending event. And what is the ‘Brussels Gazette’ now? I cry while I enumerate these trifles. ‘How shall we tell them in a stranger's ear?’

His poor good girls will now have to receive their afflicted mother in an inaccessible hovel in an obscure village in Herts, where they have been long struggling to make a school without effect; and poor deaf Richard—and the more helpless for being so—is thrown on the wide world.

My first motive in writing, and, indeed, in calling on you, was to ask if you were enough acquainted with any of the Benchers, to lay a plain statement before them of the circumstances of the family. I almost fear not, for you are of another hall. But if you can oblige me and my poor friend, who is now insensible to any favours, pray exert yourself. You cannot say too much good of poor Norris and his poor wife.

Yours ever,

CHARLES LAMB

Later, Lamb thought it better to approach members of Norris's own hall and, in the end, a pension of £80 was secured for the widow.

Of Randal Norris we know only what Lamb tells us. But there lately have come to me, through the courtesy of Mrs. Julia Towndrow of Kettering, a descendant, two letters in his own hand, and as both contain the latest tidings of Mr. and Miss Lamb up to the moment of writing—stop press news, in short—they have an interest far beyond that of their staple subject-

matter. For to read in the faded ink of more than a century ago what Mr. and Miss Lamb were doing is to bring the Brother and Sister very near to us. The first, dated Inner Temple, August 6th, 1823, is to the Misses Norris at Widford, Herts, wishing them well with their school and urging them not to despair if success does not come at once. ‘Tell your Mother that the Lambs have taken a House in Colebrook Row, Islington, have left Russell Street and will leave Dalston very soon where Mary is and Miss James. She has been ill but is recovering. Mr. Lamb thinks it was occasioned by [merely] thinking of the removal, for she had no trouble in it.’

Miss James was Mary Lamb’s devoted nurse for many years: indeed, till her death, as we shall see. ‘Give my Love to your Mother’, the writer also says, ‘and tell her Richard and Self are quite well and do not wish her to come home sooner on our account, as we jog on very well.’

The next letter, dated September 28th, 1825, is to Mrs. Norris, who is again staying at Widford, and it is chiefly about some building alterations to a house there. ‘Dear Betsy’, it begins, and the last sentence runs ‘I am sorry to say I have just heard by Miss Emma that Mr. and Miss Lamb are both unwell and the more so as it is Miss Lamb’s old complaint she is afflicted with, Charles having wrote to Miss

Emma not to come to the House as is usual at Michaelmas'. Emma, of course, was Emma Isola, the Lambs' adopted child, then away teaching.

Randal Norris died in 1827 and was buried in the Temple, and we come now to the survivors —Mrs. Norris, the two daughters Elizabeth and Jane, and the deaf son Richard, all henceforward to be living at Widford. With the Misses Norris and Richard I chanced, at a single remove, to come, in 1902, in touch, when I was preparing a biography of Lamb, for through my friend the late W. J. Craig, the Shakespearean scholar and philologist and an adorer of Elia, I had an introduction to Mrs. Elizabeth Coe, a very old but sprightly lady living at Berkhamstead, who as a child had been a pupil of the Misses Norris and remembered Lamb's visits, and Craig and I went down together one afternoon to have tea with her and to collect her reminiscences. Subsequently I wrote for the *Athenaeum* the following account of our experiences, extracts from which were afterwards incorporated in my book:

We have very little knowledge of Lamb's ways with children; but enough to show that he must have been very good company with them when he liked. He cannot have been thrown much among them. There is his charming letter to his 'child-wife', Sophy Kenney, and the allusion, in the same vein, to little Louisa Martin (whom he called Monkey), in the letter to Hazlitt of November 10th, 1805:—

'Some things too about Monkey which can't so well be written: how it set up for a fine lady, and thought it had got lovers, and was obliged to be convinced of its age from the parish register, where it was proved to be only twelve; and an edict issued, that it should not give itself airs yet these four years; and how it got leave to be called Miss, by grace.'

And in an unpublished letter from Mary Lamb to Dorothy Wordsworth I read that John Hazlitt's little girl was so fond of Charles Lamb that, when he was expected, she used to stop strangers in the street and tell them 'Mr. Lamb is coming to-night'.

There is also a passage in Charles and Mary Cowden Clarke's *Recollections of Writers* which is so much of a piece with Mrs. Coe's reminiscences that I copy it here:—

'Charles Lamb brought a choice condiment in the shape of a jar of preserved ginger for the little Novellos' delectation; and when some officious elder suggested that it was lost upon children, and therefore had better be reserved for the grown-up people, Lamb would not hear of the transfer, but insisted that children were excellent judges of good things, and that they must and should have the cate in question. He was right, for long did the remembrance remain in the family of that delicious rarity, and of the mode in which "Mr. Lamb" stalked up and down the passage with a mysterious harbingering look and stride, muttering something that sounded like a conjuration, holding the precious jar under his arm, and feigning to have found it stowed away in a dark chimney somewhere near.'

Beyond these references, and a few others, there is little evidence as to Lamb's attitude to children, for whom he wrote so much.

Mrs. Coe, in her eighty-fourth year, remembers Lamb as he was between 1827 and 1833. In 1827—aged fifty-two and free of the India House—he used often to walk down to Widford—twenty-two miles from London—to stay a day or

two among old friends and older associations. These little visits probably signified that Mary Lamb was ill, for Mrs. Coe does not remember that Mary Lamb ever accompanied her brother. At any rate, she never saw her. Miss Isola, she says, came with him once, and her feet were so sore from the journey that she had to lie in bed for two or three days, Mr. Lamb waiting for her recovery. Mr. Lamb often had blisters too, but he did not seem to mind. He loved walking too much.

Lamb’s chief friends at Widford in those days were the Norrises. The sisters were known as Miss Betsy and Miss Jane. Mrs. Norris was the good angel of the village: doctor, nurse, and every one’s refuge in trouble. Mr. Richard Norris, who was deaf and peculiar, lived in the house too.

Among the pupils at Goddard House was Elizabeth Hunt, one of the three little daughters of Thomas Hunt, of the Widford water-mill, whose wife and Mrs. Norris were old friends.

In those days—seventy and more years ago—she was Mr. Lamb’s favourite of all the Widford children—partly, she suspects, from her quickness in catching a mischievous idea. She remembers, with a vividness that is, to some extent, communicable, his affected conviction that her hair curled only by artificial means, and his repeated warnings at bedtime that she must on no account forget to put in her papers. ‘But I don’t have to curl it, Mr. Lamb, I don’t, I don’t.’ ‘Well, bring me a mug of beer from old Bogey and we’ll say no more about it.’ Old Bogey was the big cask. For, as a rule, when Mr. Lamb walked down to see the Norrises, he used to sleep at the mill. ‘Now, Mrs. Hunt,’ he would say, ‘are you going to let me creep into a goose’s belly to-night?’ for he always had his joke, and no one would expect him to call a feather-bed a ‘feather-bed’, like other folks. He said it was like heaven, in a goose’s belly. When he made a joke he did not laugh himself.

He always brought a book with him, sometimes several, and

he would read or write a great deal. His clothes were rusty and shabby, like a poor Dissenting minister's. He was very thin and looked half-starved, partly the effect of high cheekbones. He wore knee-breeches and gaiters and a high stock. He carried a walking-stick with which he used to strike at pebbles. He smoked a black clay pipe. No one would have taken him for what he was, but he was clearly a man apart. He took pleasure in looking eccentric. He was proud of being *the Mr. Lamb.*

Mrs. Coe does not remember anything about Mr. Lamb's taste in food, except that he was fond of turnips. He used to come down to breakfast late.

He was very free with his money. To beggars he always gave: just what his hand happened to draw from his pocket, even as much as three shillings. 'Poor devil! he wants it more than I do; and I've got plenty', he used to say. He would take the children into the village to the little general shop. It had a door cut in two, like a butcher's, and he would lean over the lower half and rap his stick on the floor, calling loudly, 'Abigail Ives! Abigail Ives!' 'Ah, Mr. Lamb,' she used to reply from the inner room, 'I thought I knew your rap.' 'Yes, Abigail, it is I,' he would say, 'and I've got my money with me. Give these young ladies sixpennyworth of Gibraltar rock.' Gibraltar rock was Abigail Ives's speciality, and sixpennyworth was an unheard-of amount except when Mr. Lamb was in the village. It had to be broken with a hammer. The children, Mrs. Coe says, always stood a little in awe of his unlikeness to other people, in spite of these treats.

When he joined the Norrises' dinner-table he kept every one laughing. Mr. Richard sat at one end, and some of the school children would be there too. One day Mr. Lamb gave every one a fancy name all round the table, and made a verse on each. 'You are so-and-so,' he said, 'and you are so-and-so,' adding the rhyme. 'What's he saying? What are you laughing at?' Mr. Richard asked testily, for he was short-tempered.

Miss Betsy explained the joke to him, and Mr. Lamb, coming to his turn, said—only he said it in verse—‘Now, Dick, it’s your turn. I shall call you Gruborum; because all you think of is your food and your stomach.’ Mr. Richard pushed back his chair in a rage and stamped out of the room. ‘Now I’ve done it,’ said Mr. Lamb, ‘I must go and make friends with my old chum. Give me a large plate of pudding to take to him.’ When he came back he said, ‘It’s all right. I thought the pudding would do it.’ Mr. Lamb and Mr. Richard never got on very well, and Mr. Richard didn’t like his teasing ways at all; but Mr. Lamb often went for long walks with him, because no one else would. He did many kind things like that.

There used to be a half-holiday when Mr. Lamb came, partly because he would force his way into the schoolroom and make seriousness impossible. His head would suddenly appear at the door in the midst of lessons, with ‘Well, Betsy! How do, Jane?’ ‘Oh, Mr. Lamb!’ they would say, and that was the end of work for that day. He was really rather naughty with the children. One of his tricks was to teach them a new kind of catechism (Mrs. Coe does not remember it, but we may rest assured, I fear, that it was secular), and he made a great fuss with Lizzie Hunt for her skill in saying the Lord’s Prayer backwards, which he had taught her.

He had a favourite seat in a tree in the Wilderness at Blakesware, where he would sit and read for hours. Just before meal-times Mrs. Hunt would send the children to tell him to come; but sometimes he preferred to stay there and eat some bread and cheese. He always was particular to return a message either way. ‘Give your mother my love and kisses, and say I’ll come directly.’ Or ‘Give your mother my love and kisses, and say I’ll eat her beautiful luncheon here.’ Adding, ‘Don’t forget the kisses, whatever you do.’

Mrs. Coe remembers perfectly Blakesware as it used to be. It was only partly destroyed in her young days. She recollects

particularly the figure of Nebuchadnezzar eating grass, in one of the pieces of tapestry, with his long fingers like bird's claws. It was one of the great treats for the children to pretend to take rides in the state coach, which Lamb's friend John Lily, the postilion (mentioned in the poem 'Going or Gone'), had often driven.

At other times Mr. Lamb would watch the trout in the stream, and perhaps feed them, for half the morning. Once or twice he took a rod, but he could never bring himself to fix the worms. 'Barbarous,' he used to say, 'barbarous.'

(It was one of the proudest moments of my life, let me interpolate here, when in a lecture on Lamb which the late Sir Walter Raleigh delivered at *The Times* Book Club, I heard him read in his enjoying confidential voice some of the foregoing passages.)

Mrs. Towndrow, who lends me the two Randal Norris letters from which I have quoted, has in her possession also a card-prospectus of the Goddard House School, the scene of some of the foregoing incidents, and I reproduce it on the next page as a further link between Lamb and ourselves, between those days and these.

Whether the Misses Norris began at Goddard House and Lamb miscalled it a 'hovel', or whether they moved into Goddard House later, I cannot say. But if Lamb's word was correct, then they must have moved, for Goddard House still stands for all to see. We are brought into touch with it in a reminiscent poem by Lady Buckmaster, who was born at Widford, published in 1911

MISS NORRIS'S  
Establishment,  
WIDFORD, NEAR WARE,  
HERTS.

YOUNG LADIES boarded and instructed in  
ENGLISH, HISTORY, GEOGRAPHY and  
NEEDLEWORK.

TERMS,  
THIRTY GUINEAS PER ANNUM.

		£	s.	d.
FRENCH.....	per Quarter	1	1	0
DANCING.....	ditto	1	1	0
MUSIC.....	ditto	1	1	0
DRAWING .....	ditto	1	1	0
WRITING AND ARITHMETIC	ditto	1	1	0
PAINTING ON VELVET AND				
SATIN .....	ditto	1	1	0
WASHING.....	ditto	0	15	0

It is requested that each Lady bring a Silver  
Table Spoon and Six Towels.

A Stage to and from London daily (Sundays excepted).

under the title 'My Native Village'. I quote a few lines:

There is a village little known,  
That in my memory o'ergrown,  
Will ever stand out quite alone;  
For there—the reason you may scorn—  
There stands the house where I was born. . . .

Now in this little village blest  
One house I ever loved the best,  
(Charles Lamb stayed in it as a guest),

'Twas built in day of Good Queen Anne,  
 I write of it as best I can;  
 'Twas red like others of that date,  
 And had the sweetest garden gate,  
 A little wrought-iron work of art,  
 A joy to every artist's heart. . . .

No matter what the time of year,  
 The finest flowers were always here;  
 A holly hedge grew with such bounty,  
 Its fame was spread all through the county;  
 And oh! the apples, cherries, pears,  
 What colour and what taste was theirs!

When I went down to Widford a little while ago—in April 1932, to be exact—I found Goddard House shining with new paint on its wood-work and its fences: a symmetrical red-brick residence with a very attractive pediment over the door. Never was there less of a 'hovel'. In the churchyard I found the grave of Mrs. Randal Norris and of Mrs. Coe's father, Thomas Hunt the water-miller, and of Lamb's grandmother, Mary Field (spelt Feild by the mason). But I could not find Abigail Ives, who perhaps was too lowly for a headstone; nor could I decide in my mind as to which was the cottage in this pretty village where she once sold Gibraltar Rock.

The next reference to the Widford family in the Lamb correspondence after 1827 comes in 1830, when we find Lamb informing Sarah Hazlitt that the Norris who had just been made

Treasurer of the Inner Temple was not, as she had hoped, Dick, but another man of the same name. He adds that, according to the last advices, in 1829, the family were well. There was no more Norris news from Lamb until 1833, when he wrote to Mrs. Norris sending her some books and thanking her for three agreeable days: one of the visits which Mrs. Coe recollects.

Lamb died in 1834, and poor deaf Richard in 1836 and was buried at Widford. Mary Lamb, however, survived, and on Christmas Day, 1841, we find her writing from 41 Alpha Road, Regent's Park, where she was still in the care of Miss James, to Miss Jane Norris:

'MY DEAR JANE,—

'Many thanks for your kind present—your Michaelmas goose. I thought Mr. Moxon had written to thank you—the turkeys and nice apples came yesterday.

'Give my love to your dear Mother. I was unhappy to find your note in the basket, for I am always thinking of you all, and wondering when I shall ever see any of you again.

'I long to show you what a nice snug place I have got into—in the midst of a pleasant little garden. I have a room for myself and my old books on the ground floor, and a little bedroom up two pairs of stairs. When you come to town, if you have not time to go [to] the Moxons, an

Omnibus from the Bell and Crown in Holborn would [bring] you to our door in [a] quarter of an hour. If your dear Mother does not venture so far, I will contrive to pop down to see [her]. Love and all seasonable wishes to your sister and Mary, &c. . . .

'If the lodger is gone, I shall have a bedroom will hold two! Heaven bless and preserve you all in health and happiness many a long year.'

In October 1842, Mary Lamb wrote again, with thanks for another goose—'The two legs fell to my share.

'Your cheerful [letter,] my Jane, made me feel "almost as good as new".

'Your mother and I must meet again. Do not be surprized if I pop in again for a half-hour's call some fine frosty morning.'

A year later Mrs. Norris died, aged seventy-eight. Mary Lamb was not well enough to write herself and Miss James therefore wrote for her, again to Jane Norris. The date is July 25th, 1843:

MADAM,—

Miss Lamb, having seen the Death of your dear Mother in *The Times* News Paper, is most anxious to hear from or to see one of you, as she wishes to know how you intend settling yourselves, and to have a full account of your dear Mother's last

illness. She was much shocked on reading of her death, and appeared very vexed that she had not been to see her, [and] wanted very much to come down and see you both; but we were really afraid to let her take the journey. If either of you are coming up to town, she would be glad if you would call upon her, but should you not be likely to come soon, she would be very much pleased if one of you would have the goodness to write a few lines to her, as she is most anxious about you. She begs you to excuse her writing to you herself, as she don't feel equal to it; she asked me yesterday to write for her. I am happy to say she is at present pretty well, although your dear Mother's death appears to dwell much upon her mind. She desires her kindest love to you both, and hopes to hear from you very soon, if you are equal to writing. I sincerely hope you will oblige her, and am,

Madam,

Your obedient, &c.,

SARAH JAMES

Pray don't invite her to come down to see you.

After their mother's death, both the daughters married. Their husbands were local farmers and were brothers: Charles Tween and Arthur Tween. Subsequently, when a wealthy relative of the Norris family named Faint died, the two ladies inherited an independent competency. Just as

Craig and I, in 1902, sought out Mrs. Coe, so had Canon Ainger, in 1881, sought out the Mrs. Tweens: Elizabeth, who became Mrs. Charles, and Jane, who became Mrs. Arthur, and was fortunate to find Mrs. Charles. The very charming account of his conversations with her will be found in 'Charles Lamb in Hertfordshire' in his *Lectures and Essays*. Mrs. Tween not only had her memories of Lamb; she had two presentation copies of the *Poetry for Children*, no fewer than three copies of the *Poetical Pieces* of John Lamb, and a specimen of his ability, mentioned in his son's essay, as a moulder of heads in clay or plaster of Paris. Ainger made a double appeal to the old lady, since he was both a Lamb enthusiast, and the Master of the Temple, and it was in the Temple that she had been born and brought up. She still bought many of her household necessities from a shop in Fleet Street, just opposite the Temple, for old times' sake.

One thing that Canon Ainger does not seem to have asked Mrs. Tween—about which I want to know more—is the actual reason why the Norrises—herself, her sister, her mother, and poor deaf Richard—objected, as it is always understood that they did, to the account of Randal Norris appearing under the title 'A Death-Bed' in the second *Elia* volume. There is nothing in it but good and the names are disguised. R. N. becomes N. R., Richard becomes

Robert, and Charley becomes Jemmy. The accepted theory is that Mrs. Norris did not like the publicity given to her poverty. But why, then, had she not objected when, in 1827, the letter made its first appearance in print in Hone's *Table Book*? Had she done so then, Lamb could never have reprinted it in 1833. Nor need her disapproval have applied to anything but the last few lines, after the character sketch was completed. There was, however, sufficient adverse criticism from some quarter or another to cause Lamb, or possibly his publisher, Edward Moxon, to remove 'A Death-Bed' from the volume, and when in 1835 a second edition was called for, to substitute for it that lurid and disturbing fantasy 'Confessions of a Drunkard', which had been written as long ago as 1813.

Canon Ainger, I may add, was not the only student of Lamb to visit the Tweens. Carew Hazlitt also did so, bringing away Mr. Charles Tween's testimony that 'Mr. Lamb had so small and "immaterial" a figure that when out walking with him he used to put his hands under his arms and lift him over a stile as if he were nothing'.

It is through the courtesy of Mr. C. W. B. Richardson, a descendant by marriage of Charles Tween, that I am able to publish for the first time the reproduction of Randal Norris's portrait, which to my eye has a fine air of rugged benevolence. The original is a miniature dated 1816,

and the fact that the painter of it was Matilda Betham gives it further interest, for she was of the Lamb circle too.

Matilda Betham, the daughter of a Suffolk parson, was a year younger than Lamb, and she survived him until 1852. In addition to making likenesses, she wrote poetry and compiled a biographical dictionary of famous women. Every one seems to have liked her, and Lamb's praises of her *Lay of Marie* should have been intoxicating to her. But he would not allow her to do his face, although Coleridge had submitted to the ordeal. His first refusal was in 1808, and I feel sure there were others. Nor in 1815 could he find time to go through the artist's poem; but to be the recipient of such excuses as follow should have been gratification enough:

... My head is in such a state from incapacity for business that I certainly know it to be my duty not to undertake the veriest trifle in addition. I hardly know how to go on. I have tried to get some redress by explaining my health, but with no great success. No one can tell how ill I am, because it does not come out to the exterior of my face, but lies in my skull deep and invisible. I wish I was leprous and black jaundiced skin-over, and that all was as well within as my cursed looks. You must not think me worse than I am. I am determined not to be overset, but to give up business rather and get 'em to allow me a trifle for services past. O that I had been a shoe-maker or a baker, or a man of large independent fortune. O darling Laziness! heaven of Epicurus! Saints Everlasting Rest! that I could drink vast potations of thee thro' unmeasured Eternity. *Otium cum vel sine dignitate.* Scan-

dalous, dishonourable, any-kind-of-repose. I stand not upon the *dignified sort*. Accursed damned desks, trade, commerce, business—Inventions of that old original busybody brainworking Satan, sabbathless restless Satan—

A curse relieves. Do you ever try it?

Although Lamb did not want his own countenance limned, he was busy in Miss Betham's interest. In 1816, the year in which the Randal Norris miniature was made, Mary Lamb was writing to Sarah Hutchinson, Wordsworth's sister-in-law (or 'third wife', as Lamb called her):

... Do you think Mr. Wordsworth would have any reluctance to write (strongly recommending to their patronage) to any of his rich friends in London to solicit employment for Miss Betham as a Miniature Painter? If you give me hopes that he will not be averse to do this, I will write to you more fully stating the infinite good he would do by performing so irksome a task as I know asking favours to be. . . .

to which Charles Lamb adds:

... I just snatch the Pen out of my sister's hand to finish rapidly. Wordswth. may tell De Q that Miss B's price for a Virgin and Child is three guineas.

Bearing these remarks in mind, I should say it is more than likely that it was Lamb's commendation of Miss Betham's skill which led to this miniature of Randal Norris being painted at all. 'He did many kind things like that.'

## PRAYERS AGAINST RAIN

THE summer of 1931 was not the only one that was ruined by rain. I find that there were torrents in August seventy-two years ago,—in 1860, to be exact,—and I know this because I have just alighted upon a sermon preached by Charles Kingsley at Eversley in August of that year. Every one knows that Kingsley was a vigorous-minded independent clergyman, very strong in his beliefs, his antipathies and his prejudices, but it may not be so well known that on the 26th of August, 1860, he refused to unite with most of the other clergy of the country in enjoining prayers for fine weather. We may not agree with his praises, in one of his poems, of that blighting scourge (to my poor frame) the brave North-Easter; but his arguments for refusing to call upon the Almighty to change His weather programme will probably seem sound enough.

Let me quote a little: 'First. I do not know that the prayer is needed. It speaks of a plague of rain and waters. It speaks of the rain as a

punishment. Therefore I see no reason to use it unless we are sure that these particular rains now falling are a plague and a punishment: and of that I have no proof. I have rather proof to the contrary. There is great reason to believe that these rains, over-heavy and hurtful as they seem, are really a boon and a blessing; and in this way. A certain quantity of water, and that a very vast quantity, needs to be circulating throughout the world, as blood runs through our bodies, simply to keep the world going; to keep up life and health in vegetables, in animals, in man. One of the most common, it is certainly the most useful, of all things which we see around us. One half of all living things, whether trees, vegetables, animals, or our own bodies, is water. The seemingly driest air, the heart of mountains, and the very stones beneath our feet, contain water; and would not be what they are without it. Without water, and water enough, the earth would be a useless desert. Water has produced, and is still producing, the soil which man tills, the minerals and metals which he manufactures, and in these days of steam, almost everything which he needs for his daily life. This water must rise from the sea in clouds, and fall again on the earth in rain, and that according to a regular average; and unless that average is kept up we shall have barrenness and poverty, disease and death; and God has so well ordered His earth

that the proper average rainfall is kept up, not altogether year by year, but taking one year with another.'

There was more natural science and some sociology to follow, and then the preacher developed his second reason for not praying for the weather to be changed, and that was because it would be presumptuous. I will say little about the presumption, since it is so obvious that one almost wonders he troubled to explain it. But here is a salient passage: 'Either we expect that our prayers will alter the weather, or we do not. If we do not expect it, we are most presumptuous in praying this prayer, for we are simply mocking God: and if we do expect it, are we not somewhat presumptuous also? I know little or nothing about the weather, and God knows all. Which is most likely to be right—God or I? God knows by what means these rains are produced: I do not. God knows what effect they will have: I do not. And shall I set up my wisdom—or rather my ignorance—against God's wisdom? Shall I set up my narrow notions of what is good for England against God's boundless knowledge of what is good for England and for the whole world at the same time? Shall I presume, because I think it is raining too long here, to ask God to alter the tides of the ocean, the form of the continents, the pace at which the earth spins round, the force, and light, and speed of sun

and moon? For all this, and no less, I shall ask, if I ask Him to alter the skies even for a single day.'

It is probable that the two Kingsley brothers, Charles and Henry, had different views on most things, but a passage in Henry's novel *Geoffrey Hamlyn* proves that he could see eye to eye with the rector of Eversley in this particular matter. The Scotch overseer Geordie thus describes an Australian bush fire: 'When the fire came owre the hill the other day, I just put up a bit prayer to the Lord, that He'd spare the hay-stack and He spared it. But I never prayed for rain. I didna, ye see, like to ask the Lord to upset all his gran' laws of electricity and evaporation, just because it would suit us. I thocht He'd likely ken better than mysel'.'

I don't say that Charles Kingsley's argument would satisfy anyone planning a picnic, or any cricketer or cricket enthusiast contemplating a ruined pitch, but it is difficult to gainsay it, especially when the speaker is a paid servant of the Church. It is, however, not easy even for the most pious and receptive to become used to rain day after day. The human mind is always hoping, and 'Surely', we say, 'it must be fine to-morrow'. But it isn't, and frustrated hopes, if they go on long enough, end in profound dejection. Besides, rain is destructive. While it is moistening the earth it is rotting the thatch;

it soaks through our boots; it makes dogs (and I am sure not even Kingsley could like that) very unwelcome neighbours indoors. Rain should fall only at night. ‘O God, send us all the rain which Thou in Thy infinite wisdom knowest that we ought to have, but send it at night’—that is a prayer which, if there are to be any of this kind, might well be added to the Liturgy.

Some French editor once said that every book could be condensed into a chapter, and every chapter into a paragraph. Probably without knowing, the American poet, James Whitcomb Riley, was condensing Kingsley’s sermon when he wrote the quatrain:

It ain’t no use to grumble nor complain,  
    “Tis just as easy to rejoice;  
When God deals out the weather and sends rain,  
    Well, rain’s my choice.

Another American, Mark Twain, and a friend of Riley’s, exhibited the same common sense in *Innocents Abroad* when he made the first officer of the *Quaker City* give his opinion of the passengers’ prayers for a fair wind. ‘There they are, down there every night at eight bells, praying for fair winds—when they know as well as I do that this is the only ship going East this time of the year, but there’s a thousand coming West—what’s a fair wind for us is a *head* wind to them. ‘The Almighty’s blowing a fair wind for a thou-

sand vessels, and this tribe wants Him to turn it clear around so as to accommodate *one*—and 'she a steamship at that! It ain't good sense, it ain't good reason, it ain't good Christianity, it ain't common human charity. Avast with such non-sense!'

## BEDLAM

IT is long since the poor deranged inmates of Bethlem Hospital were one of the sights of London, and now they will never be a sight of London again, for the Hospital is to be a museum. But for centuries it was the fashion to take country cousins there and even to mock. Incredible thought! In the *World* in 1753 a writer describes one of these visits. 'It was in Easter week, when, to my great surprise, I found a hundred people at least, who, having paid their twopence apiece, were suffered, unattended, to run rioting up and down the wards, making sport and diversion of the miserable inhabitants.' As a boy even the sensitive poet Cowper once went there. He was ashamed, but confesses, in a letter to John Newton, his spiritual adviser, that 'the madness of some of them had such a humorous air, and displayed itself in so many whimsical freaks, that it was impossible not to be entertained, at the same time that I was angry with myself for being so'. He did not, however, so far as we know, indulge himself in the other

honoured amusement of his day—pelting the victims of the pillory with rotten eggs.

I never entered Bedlam when it was a hospital for the insane, but when it becomes a museum I hope to see it. The present building dates from 1812, when the first stone was laid, being completed in 1815, but the fine cupola which stands out in any wide prospect of London was added later. This is to remain. The architect was Sydney Smirke, who completed his brother Robert's commission for the British Museum, and alone added the Reading Room there.

Among the famous patients at the Hospital was Oliver Cromwell's giant porter, and at least three would-be regicides were incarcerated there: Margaret Nicholson, who harboured a fantastic notion that she was entitled to the throne, and endeavoured, in 1786, to stab George III in order to facilitate her succession; James Hatfield, who loosed a pistol at the same king in Drury Lane Theatre in 1800; and Edward Oxford, who, in 1840, fired two shots at Queen Victoria as she was driving in the Green Park. Both monarchs behaved with the utmost coolness. ‘The poor creature is mad,’ said George when Margaret Nicholson had been seized; ‘she has not hurt me; do not hurt her’; while, at Drury Lane, he was so little disturbed by Hatfield’s ill-aimed bullet that he slept just as quietly as usual throughout the play, the interval, and the after-piece. Queen

Victoria, after Oxford's vain effort, continued her drive. Two other attempts on her life were made, both in 1842, the first again in the Green Park and the second in the Mall.

I have since discovered, by chance, that Hatfield was afterwards transferred to Newgate, the source of information being the memoirs of Louis Simond, a French traveller in England in 1810 and 1811, who, when he visited the prison, found the would-be regicide there. 'I was shown', he says, 'the man who fired a pistol at the King twelve or fifteen years ago at the theatre. He stood picking his teeth in a corner very composedly, well dressed and looking young [he must have been quite young at the time]. I asked whether the man was insane. "Not at all," said the turnkey, "no more than you, only very cunning." But what is there so cunning in getting himself shut up here for life? They have made him foreman of the ward, he has a good salary, a guinea a week, I think he said, "happy as a king, eats the best of everything—what can he want more?"' Of the subsequent career of Hatfield I know nothing.

Margaret, or Peg, Nicholson, who was an inmate for forty-two years, till her death in 1828, was naturally a show-piece, but even more in demand among visitors was Hannah Snell, a prototype of that extraordinary woman who a year or so ago filled the newspapers with her

exploits—‘Colonel’ Barker. Hannah Snell took to male attire in order more successfully to track down an errant husband, and, liking it so well, enlisted, first as a soldier, and later, under the name James Gray, as a marine. ‘The smoothness of her chin earned her the sobriquet of “Molly”, but, as her briskness increased her popularity, her shipmates rechristened her “Hearty Jimmy”.’ On receiving the news that her husband had been executed, she left the Navy and resumed her petticoats. This was in 1750, when she was twenty-seven, and, with a promptness that would be laudable even to-day, she was ready with her autobiography in the same year: *The Female Soldier; or, the Surprising Adventures of Hannah Snell.* Another manifestation which shows that there is nothing new in modern publicity was her engagement to appear on the stage at more than one theatre, in full regimentals, with a little drill exercise thrown in. Her next steps were to secure a military pension on account of wounds received at Pondicherry; to open a public-house at Wapping, very properly called ‘The Female Warrior’; and to marry again. When widowed once more, she took a third husband. Not long afterwards her brain gave way and she was removed to Bedlam, where she died in 1792, aged sixty-nine.

Hannah Snell (to exchange Bedlam for a moment for Brighton) had a contemporary named

Phoebe Hessel, also a male impersonator in uniform, who, after her military career was over, became one of the most celebrated characters of London-on-Sea. The story went that it was in order to be near her lover, Samuel Golding, a private in 'Kirk's Lambs,' that Phoebe dressed herself as a man and enlisted. She followed him even to the West Indies and, when he was wounded, nursed him and eventually married him. After his death she married Hessel. She kept her secret, but, as she confessed to a visitor, told it to the ground: 'I dug a hole that would hold a gallon and whispered it there'. Her last years were spent as an apple-woman, and by reason not only of her romantic history and her great age, but of her quickness in repartee, she had many customers. As a consumer of liquor she held many records; and she made the phrase about swearing like a trooper a living thing. But a greater title to popularity was the friendly terms she was on with George IV, who allowed her a pension of eighteen pounds a year and called her 'a jolly good fellow'. He also, when at last it was needed, provided the money for her grave, which you may still see near the old parish church of Brighton on its steep hill. According to the stonemason, this tough old Amazon was well over a hundred when she died.

Two poets were lodged in Bedlam; perhaps more, but two for certain. One was Nathaniel

Lee, author of ‘The Rival Queens’ and other tragedies, who was there for five years, brought to a state of insanity largely by drink, although he had some natural leaning that way. Dryden, his friend and collaborator (the author of the line ‘Great wits are sure to madness near allied’), records that when some one remarked to Lee that it was an easy thing to write like a madman, he replied, ‘No, it is very difficult to write like a madman, but it is a very easy matter to write like a fool.’ When Sir Roger L’Estrange visited him, he remarked, in blank verse:

I’m strange Lee alter’d; you are still L’Estrange.

Lee’s tragedies are often little better than good dramatic fustian; but the other poet, who was for a while a Bedlamite, Christopher Smart, the Cambridge scholar, was of the true choir. The ‘Song of David’, which he is said to have scribbled on the walls of his cell, has a rapture and a glory all its own. He also was visited by kind friends, among them Dr. Johnson, whose opinion was that he ought not to be confined. ‘His infirmities’, he said afterwards, ‘were not noxious to Society. He insisted upon people praying with him, and I’d as lief pray with Kit Smart as with any one else. Another charge was that he did not love clean linen; and I have no passion for it.’ Smart, like Lee, was in time liberated,

only, however, to become an inmate of a debtor's prison, where he died in 1771.

After these poets the most illustrious inmate of Bethlem Hospital was one who, though not a poet in words, was a poet in paint; whom, indeed, Constable, a fellow-artist, described as being 'all poetry'. This was John Robert Cozens, 'the water-colourist, and the most potent influence in the early art education of Turner himself. It is only in recent years that the lovely, almost enchanted, work of the two Cozens—father and son: the father, Alexander, was a natural son of Peter the Great—has been rightly recognized; but when they were alive they were artists' artists, and John was a favourite protégé of Dr. Munro, the Bethlem physician, who, at his house at No. 8 Adelphi Terrace, played the patron to all the most promising aquarellists of the day. He did not then know—or did he suspect it?—that Cozens would one day be his patient at Bedlam. Poor Cozens, we say. But he had his visions; and this is not too good a world to be sane in.

## THE BAG

'THAT'S a very pretty bag,' I said.  
'Where did you get it?'

'I bought it,' she said, 'on the ship at Port Said. From a man in a fez. I think it's camel-skin.'

'Did you give him what he wanted?' I asked.

'Yes,' she admitted.

I groaned.

'Wasn't he disappointed?' I asked.

'He smiled,' she said. 'He had beautiful teeth. But I didn't buy it for myself, you can be sure of that. I bought it as a present for Sophie. Dear Sophie! I always buy Sophie something, and she was so kind in taking care of Yum Sing.'

'Well,' I said, 'that's all right. Sophie deserves everything she gets. But why don't you give it to her?'

'She's been in Scotland.'

'Yes, but she's back now,' I said. 'She came back last week.'

'I know,' she said. 'But——'

'But what?'

'But I find it very difficult to part from this bag. I like it. In fact, it's just what I want for my wool.'

'It's just what Sophie wants for her wool,' I said.

'Yes, I know,' she said. 'But—well, I was wondering if I wouldn't get Sophie something else.'

'But she would expect something from abroad,' I said. 'You always give her something when you have been on a voyage.'

'That's all right,' she said. 'There are lots of shops in London where you can get things made abroad. Bags, baskets, shawls.'

'Wouldn't that be dishonest?' I asked. 'Poor Sophie, expecting you had thought of her a thousand miles away and then you buying the thing in Regent Street. Do we like that?'

'She would never know,' she said.

'You must do it your own way,' I said, 'but don't forget to take the label off.'

And so I left her.

The next time I called I saw the bag again. It hung beside her chair, but it was not in use.

'Hullo!' I said. 'Sophie's present still here?'

'Yes. Isn't it awful of me? I haven't given it to her yet, and I haven't been to see her. I don't know what she can think of me, but I like the bag so much.'

'You're a very selfish woman,' I said. 'Don't you know that the only presents worth giving are those we want to keep?'

'I've heard you say so,' she said. 'But I don't think I'm noble like that. Anyway I can't bear to part with this bag. It's so pretty. Isn't it pretty? Fancy camels, those great ugly clumsy things, walking all wobbly, leading to a bag like that!'

'Then Sophie is to be utterly neglected,' I said. 'For the first time after all these years. And she was taking care of your dog too.'

'Yes, it's dreadful of me, isn't it?' she said. 'Well, all right. That's settled. She shall have the bag. I'll take it round to-morrow. After all, she might have gone away again.'

'She's been back from Scotland for a month now,' I said.

And so I left her.

The next time I called, a fortnight later, there was the bag again. It was now full of wool.

I was genuinely shocked.

'Then you never gave Sophie her present, after all?' I said.

'Yes, I did. I gave her the bag.'

'Didn't she like it?'

'She adored it.'

'Then how did you get it again?'

'I asked her for it back.'

'You didn't?'

'Yes, I did. I found I couldn't do without it. It was the right size and the right colour. I asked her very nicely. I wrote and said that I hadn't realized how fond I had grown of the bag, how much it meant to me, and would she be an angel and let me have it back and I would give her something else. Something far nicer. And she did.'

'Well, I'm hanged!' I said.

'Sophie didn't mind a bit,' she said. 'She's like that. I don't think you know her as well as I do.'

'And what have you given her instead?' I asked.

'Oh, I haven't got it yet,' she said. 'I thought perhaps you'd help.'

## OLD TOPICAL PRINTS

IT requires a very determined effort of the imagination to conceive oneself as living in days when there was no photography. Finding myself in a room where a pair of coloured engravings hang, one called 'Peace' and the other 'War', I realized that in their day—to be exact, June 4, 1805—the print-seller was the only form of art-editor. There were newspapers enough, and now and then, if the occasion demanded—that is to say, if a first-class murderer or felon was at large—a woodcut might find its way into their pages; but illustrated journalism was not born until some decades later. Hence, if our great-great-grandparents wanted to know what a public man was like, they had to wait until his portrait was engraved, by hand, and published.

The particular print-seller who was attempting to please the taste of the moment on June 4, 1805, was John P. Thompson, of Great Newport Street, and we must agree that he laid his plans well, with Napoleon preparing his flat-bottomed fleet of invaders at Boulogne, and Martello Towers

rising in defiance all along the south-east coast. The artist was Henry Singleton, and the engraver J. Whessell. One wonders what the procedure was. Did Singleton approach Thompson or Thompson Singleton? From what I know of artists and art dealers, I should say that Thompson approached Singleton.

'What do you think, Singleton,' he probably said, 'to a pair of topical contrasts? Always popular, contrasts. In one, the blessings of Peace; in the other, the grief and tragedy of War. The warrior's farewell, don't you know.'

'Yes,' Singleton would have said, 'but what kind of warrior, soldier or sailor?'

'Both,' replied Thompson (refraining, however, from quoting Mr. Kipling). 'A little of each, but make the Navy more prominent. Let there even be a suggestion of Nelson himself. You can do that on your head because you once painted his portrait. But, of course, only a suggestion of him.'

'Yes,' said Singleton, 'I can do that.'

'Good,' said Thompson. 'Then Whessell can do the engraving and I'll get poor old Hacksmith to write some verses. Be as quick as you can, while the scare's on.'

Henry Singleton, born in 1766, was from tenderest years doomed to be an artist. His uncle, a miniaturist, brought him up, and as early as 1780, when the boy was only fourteen, he was

exhibiting at the Society of Artists, in Spring Gardens, a picture entitled 'A Soldier Returned to his Family', which was advertised, owing to a mistake, genuine or wilful, as the work of 'Master Singleton, aged ten'. Entering the Royal Academy schools, he won in 1784 a silver medal, and in 1788 the gold medal and with it special praise from Sir Joshua in the presidential address. But although in 1793 he was commissioned by the Royal Academy to paint a scene of the adjudicating council at work, containing forty portraits, Singleton was never himself R.A. or even A.R.A. He lived, a successful illustrator and a contented bachelor, until 1839, when he died in Kensington Gore and was buried in St. Martin-in-the-Fields. One of his latest tasks was a series of cabinet pictures suggested by the plays of Shakespeare. Such was the ingenious and long-sighted John P. Thompson's ally.

Now for the pair of prints. In 'War' we see the Nelsonic figure in the foreground—very like—enfolding with his left arm (the other is not visible) with one movement both wife and child.

While the young prattler claims his sire's embrace,  
Prophetic tears bedew the mother's face,

says Hacksmith. Behind the wife are a nurse-maid, a curiously ugly boy, also in epaulettes, and a brown and white dog. In the background are

two frigates in full sail. Still farther away is a blazing town.

Death scowls terrific o'er yon distant walls,

says Hacksmith. Nearer is a regiment of soldiers, and on the right are a general, a standard-bearer and the head of an intensely black horse. Heavy curtains complete the picture. It is 'War' right enough. Singleton forgot nothing.

The scene of 'Peace' is laid in a farm-house. From the ceiling are suspended two hams. A gun hangs over the china on the mantelpiece. Outside the door is a jackdaw's cage; inside, a dead hare. There is again a brown and white dog, probably from the same model. The persons of the piece are the farmer, registering plenty and authority; three retainers, old and young, with scythe, rake and pitchfork, to whom the farmer is giving orders.

The father mindful of his plenteous gains,  
Sending all ages to the neighbouring plains,

says Hacksmith. And on the other side of the picture, near a spinning-wheel, are the wife and two children examining a pair of doves; while behind them is a venerable figure with long hair and spectacles, seated, as aged men were then expected to do, before an open Bible, and looking through the doorway. But when Hacksmith says:

While the old grandsire, to his duty true,  
Pursues devotion with its house in view,

he is wrong, for the building in the distance which the glib and servile versifier, glancing carelessly at the design, took for devotion's house, a church, is in reality a windmill. (Or could the poet have, by devotion's house, meant heaven? I should hate to be unfair to him.) He made, however, no mistake about the two birds. He not only saw them but used them:

A mother mindful of domestic love,  
Emblem delightful of the timid dove.

If the pictures were sold separately there was probably no great run on 'Peace', and for a while 'War' may not have gone too well; but the gods were playing into Thompson's hands and justifying his sagacity. Less than five months after the date of publication the news reached England that the battle of Trafalgar had been fought, the Napoleonic menace was ended and Nelson had died gallantly on his flagship after issuing the ever memorable order to the fleet. Singleton's illustrious rival, Benjamin West, and his print-seller were, of course, to be the principal artistic beneficiaries of this historic event; but the similarity of the central figure in Singleton's picture, coupled with the tenderness of his attitude and the poignancy of the parting, could not fail to

draw guineas from a sentimental people at once bereaved of a hero and frantic with relief.

Singleton's good luck was very different from the experience of Tilly Kettle, a forerunner as an ally of the print-seller and the painter of an earlier British admiral. As it happened, this portrait—of Kempenfeldt—was actually being engraved by Richard Earlom in 1782 when the *Royal George* was wrecked, and

Kempenfeldt went down  
with twice four hundred men.

As naturally there would be a demand for a print of the famous sailor, Earlom renewed his efforts, but, before he could finish, a rival engraver, Robert Pollard, called at Kettle's house in Old Bond Street, opposite Burlington Gardens, entered his studio by bribing his servant, made a rapid pencil copy of the portrait and rushed out an engraving which sold seven thousand impressions in three days.

Prevision had been, as it happens, also at work in connexion with Benjamin West's famous picture of the death of Nelson, but prevision on a higher plane than that of commercial acumen. Mr. Whitley, in his *Artists and Their Friends in England*, tells how early in 1805 West sat next to Nelson at a public dinner, when the great sailor, after lamenting the fact that he himself had no artistic ability or taste, remarked with

admirable tact, ‘but there is one picture, Mr. West, whose power I always feel. I never pass a print shop where your “Death of Wolfe” is in the window without being stopped by it’; and he went on to ask why West had not painted anything else like it.

‘Because’, said West, ‘there are no more subjects.’

‘Damn it,’ replied Nelson, ‘I hadn’t thought of that.’

‘But, my Lord,’ West, who was always the courtier, continued, ‘I fear that your own intrepidity may furnish me with such another scene; and, if so, I shall certainly avail myself of it.’

‘Will you?’ cried Nelson, touching the painter’s glass with his own, ‘then I hope I shall die in the next battle.’

## MASSED ATTACK

THE bet was that we could not induce a self-centred and complacent lady of great wealth to part with a few roots of a pretty blue flower—one of the anemone family—which was running wild beneath her trees. If you had ever met Mrs. Meridian you would understand why no one had the pluck to ask her for it direct.

The attacking party were the friends I was staying with and myself. Let me call my friends father and mother. The sum at stake was half a crown.

‘What a charming plant!’ said father, opening the campaign. ‘I can’t remember ever seeing it before. Is it difficult to grow?’

‘It grows almost automatically,’ said Mrs. Meridian. ‘But then so many of my flowers do. I don’t know what there is about me that shrubs and plants so love, but there must be something.’

‘I wonder how it would do with us?’ said mother.

‘Let me see,’ said Mrs. Meridian—‘what is

your soil? Clay, isn't it? I shouldn't think it would do at all. Mine is sandy loam. I doubt if there's a better soil in the country.'

'It would be an interesting experiment,' said father. 'One never knows what a flower will do till you try. I remember . . .'

'What do you think of my Japanese irises?' Mrs. Meridian asked.

'Very beautiful,' said mother. 'But about that blue anemone—did you say it was from a seed or a bulb?'

'I don't know,' said Mrs. Meridian; 'all I know is that it follows me about. All I have to do with a flower is to smile at it.'

She smiled at us.

'Wouldn't it be delightful, Henry,' said mother to father, 'to have a mass of colour like that just under the breakfast-room window?'

'Perfect,' said father.

'Just where we need something most,' said mother.

'Exactly,' said father.

After a pause of dead silence I thought it was perhaps my turn.

'If you were to exhibit this anemone,' I said to our hostess, 'how would you deal with it? A small section of earth on a tray, I suppose? It would come away quite easily and not prejudice the rest.'

'I have never exhibited it,' she said. 'It's

unique here. I don't hold with tearing plants from their own environment. Simpkins, my head gardener, can exhibit apples and marrows if he likes. I put no obstacle in his way. But for my own part I think flower-shows vulgar.'

'Yes, yes,' said mother, too hastily I thought.

'Very vulgar,' said father. 'All the same, there is something in the stimulus of rivalry, you know. Envy can play its beneficial part. For example, we envy you this profusion of blue, Mrs. Meridian; don't we, my dear?'

'Yes, indeed,' said mother. 'Intensely.'

But even this frontal thrust was futile.

'I'm not surprised,' said Mrs. Meridian. 'Most people do. Strangers have come from long distances to see it. They ask at the lodge for permission.'

'And you let them, of course,' I said, 'with your generosity.'

'I couldn't refuse,' said Mrs. Meridian graciously. 'It wouldn't be right to. I consider myself not as an owner but as a trustee. How could I stand between nature-lovers and so fair a sight? No.'

There was another dreadful pause.

'You have not told us its name,' said father to Mrs. Meridian. 'I should like to write to my nurseryman for it.'

'We don't know it,' said Mrs. Meridian. 'It's peculiar to me. "Meridian Blue" is our name

for it. You'd have no chance with any nurseryman.'

'Dear, dear,' said father, 'what a pity! I do indeed congratulate you, Mrs. Meridian, on your speciality.'

The game was obviously up, but mother wouldn't give in.

'There are some straggling shoots of it behind the cedar there,' she said. 'Rather in the dark. Would it not be a good thing to lift them and plant them in the light, to start, so to speak, a new colony, a new vision of joy?'

'Better leave them to work their own way,' said Mrs. Meridian. 'I dislike to interfere with the liberty of any one, sentient or non-sentient. Although to speak of flowers—and especially such flowers as these—as non-sentient is grotesque.'

'Of course,' said mother. 'They must think and feel and even perhaps know what we are talking about.'

'They might even', I added, 'be actually talking among themselves and wondering what kind of a garden these visitors have got, and saying they would love to see it, or even to try it as a home. What do you think, sir?' I said, turning to father.

'Not inconceivable at all,' he remarked. 'In any case I don't see why flowers should be confined to one single spot all their lives.'

'You seem to be suggesting that my anemones

are not happy here,' said Mrs. Meridian with some asperity. 'I assure you they are. I don't know how I know it, but I do. I wouldn't let one of them out of my sight for anything that could be offered me.'

I looked at father, father looked at mother, mother passed the look on to me.

'Well,' said mother briskly, 'I'm sure Mrs. Meridian is tired. We must tear ourselves away.'

And we tore.

'Nice people,' I seemed to hear Mrs. Meridian saying to her companion at dinner that evening — 'nice people, but with only one idea: to get me to break up the blue anemones. Very strange how revolutionary notions can penetrate even to such a haven of peace as this garden!'

Half a crown lost.

## DANTE'S TRIUMPH

THERE used to be a question, ‘What becomes of the flies in the winter-time?’ the answer to which I never heard, for I never heard the song. But if any one should come to me to know what becomes of clowns in the summer-time I could to some extent reply. I say to some extent, because my knowledge is limited to one. I know what became of one Paris clown this last summer-time, because I found him at his task far from that city; and the occasion is perhaps worth putting on record for the reason that it adjusted a balance which, I fancy, is seldom adjusted.

As an habitué of the Cirque d’Hiver in Paris I am familiar with all the clowns, not only with the Three Brothers—François, Paul and Albert, the Fratellini—but with the little company of Augustes too: the ragged brigade who fill in the time while parallel bars are being fixed, or cyclists’ flooring is being laid, or elephants’ tubs are rolled in, and are seldom so funny that you notice it. Although I know their faces and their

hats (so infrequently on their heads) and their clothes and their idiotsyncrasies, I know the name only of one; and that is the one boy among them, who, since his father has been a clown of some fame, is to be a clown too. For no other reason. The question of the possession of any native drollery does not come into it: he is merely following a law of the circus. This boy I always watch with a kind of a pitying fascination, because beyond his tumblings he has nothing comic about him, and his tumblings are not irresistible. His father, however, who is one of the thickset hectoring clowns in traditional clown's costume who act as interlocutors to partners dressed as scarecrows, having succeeded, the boy may succeed too: a purely man-made humorist. And there is also the inevitable dwarf, identical in shape and features with dwarfs in circuses all the world over.

Well, among these Augustes is a man in black, like Dante. He has a red nose and an apparently toothless mouth with a downward curve, and for years I had thought he looked embittered, dejected, as though he had missed it and did not intend to make any of the traditional brave efforts of his profession to hide his grief in gaiety. His entry at the head of the other Augustes glinted with a momentary spark, and then the spark went out and he was lost amid their rival and noisier capers. Why there should have

developed the theory that many of these performers are better than a single one I have never understood; and I believe it to be a fallacy. The greatest of all Augustes—and, so far as my memory goes, the first—Marceline, of the London Hippodrome—was always alone. The new rule, however, is to have from six to nine of them at once, and at the Cirque d'Hiver my poor Dante leads them in, and if he can secure the undivided attention of only half a dozen spectators he is lucky.

Last summer, however, I saw him under different circumstances, no longer a cipher but a dominant figure. It was at Luxembourg, where a travelling circus solved the problem of how to get through the long hours after an early dinner. I forget the name of the circus; all that I can remember is that the owner had himself been a famous clown and claimed to be the first to paint designs on a clown's costume. Anyway it was a good circus, with one or two turns of astonishing excellence—chief of them a wire-walker named Aeros, who affected to be drunk—and only one Auguste, at whom, before he could reach the ring and, in the distance, was uttering his cry of 'Cuckoo', the people began to laugh. 'Cuckoo,' he cried, 'Cuckoo!' and forthwith set about his tricks, while the audience, many of whom clearly had been there before, displayed supreme contentment. So also did I, not so much because he

was comic as because, as my astonished eyes told me, he was my old friend Dante, promoted to the first rank, and all alone, and revelling in it. The nose was still red, the mouth still sagged at the corners, but his eyes sparkled and he thought of new nonsense and executed it every moment: always to the accompaniment of his joyous bird-call, which at the Cirque d'Hiver he had never uttered, or, if he had, only in a whisper. Next to the little drunken man on the wire he was the most popular person there, and, as he was with us most of the time and the little drunken man was but an episode, he cannot have resented him too much. It was Dante's triumph.

I knew it that evening; I knew it even more surely the next day when in the refined streets of Luxembourg the small boys were calling 'Cuckoo' too.

That was in September last, when the Cirque d'Hiver was closed. I was there again not long ago and again it was Dante who led the Augustes in. They were the same as of old—the same boy, a shade nearer manhood, the same dwarf; and I saw that Dante had returned to his dejection and his rapid loss of identity as the universal mumming set in. And not a hint of 'Cuckoo' did he give us. But I did not feel so sorry for him as I used to do; I know now how happy he is wherever he goes in the summer-time.

## TWO JACKS

**A**MONG the obelisks of Sussex, the Martyrs' Memorial on the cliff above Lewes is, I suppose, the most significant; but as a landmark Brightling Needle, which John Fuller, M.P., the lord of Rose Hill, built more than a century ago, is more imposing. Needle, however, is a poor word, for this monument has no sharpness whatever. Cleopatra's Needle is ill enough named; the Brightling Needle, worse.

Seeking it again the other day, I found it to be all of sandstone, on the very top of its grassy hill, commanding astonishing views (on clear days extending even to the French coast), with a dry moat around it and not a word to indicate its origin or purpose. Obelisks should be inscribed. About two hundred yards away is the Observatory which Fuller built, his interest in science leading to the foundation of the Fullerian Professorships (which he described as his two children), the first Professor being Faraday; and a mile distant is Rose Hill, where he lived, and Bright-

ling churchyard, where he lies, beneath a pyramid tomb which might be that of Cheops himself through the wrong end of the Observatory telescope. I say lies, but that is wrong; for the old autocrat insisted that he was to be dressed, after death, in his evening clothes and buried seated in his favourite arm-chair.

This John, or Jack, Fuller, called variously 'Honest Jack Fuller' and 'Mad Jack Fuller' (which can mean the same thing), was a Sussex squire who in his day was what might be called a card. His fortune had been made by his ancestors out of their iron foundries at Waldron and Heathfield—hence his motto: 'Carbone et forcipibus',—for Sussex was in Tudor times and later something of a black country, with the reputation of turning out the best cannon and the best cannon balls that could be obtained. Vestiges of the works are still visible, while hammer ponds are, of course, continually a feature of the landscape, and some of the finest of the old houses were the ironmasters' homes: Mr. Kipling's, for instance, at Burwash.

Honest Jack Fuller's chief characteristics seem to have been impulsiveness, hot temper, and the arrogance that can result from riches and can be fostered also by the subservience of the people about one; and, by being careful never to marry, he was furthermore without the corrective commentary of the critic on the hearth. None of

these qualities and defects were allowed, however, to impair his benevolence and public spirit.

His principal title to fame, so far as I am concerned, was his interest in the genius of Joseph William Mallord Turner, who, in the teens of the last century, made for him a series of water-colours of the Rose Hill neighbourhood which are among his finest works. There were thirteen in all, of which seven were engraved by W. B. Cooke for his *Views in Sussex* and three were aquatinted by Stadler. The subjects were Rose Hill, two scenes, one including the observatory; Pevensey Castle; the Vale of Pevensey from Rose Hill; Pevensey Bay from Crowhurst; Battle Abbey with Beachy Head in the distance; 'Battle: the Spot where Harold fell'; Bodiam Castle (which Fuller had bought to preserve, as, more recently, the late Lord Curzon bought it again); two views of the Vale of Ashburnham, the very centre of the old iron industry; Hurstmonceux Castle; Beaufort, near Bexhill; and the Vale of Heathfield. Turner, of course, was always Turner and, if in some of these lovely pictures, Sussex is more like an enchanted land than an English county, no one must object. I, for one, should not.

As to Jack Fuller's honesty, it did not prevent him from suspecting a want of that commodity in every one else, for when he rode to London his coachman, his footmen, and himself were heavily

armed; while a story is still current in the village, to account for a pointed stone erection on high ground between Dallington and Battle (known as the Sugar-Loaf), which, if true, classes him with the most ingenious and resourceful rogues in history. It seems that one evening at a party away from home, Honest Jack was describing Rose Hill and its beauties, and, mentioning the view from the lawn, he said it included the top of Dallington spire. One of the guests, who had been in the neighbourhood, denied this.

'You mean to say that I can't see Dallington spire from my lawn,' said Fuller.

'Yes.'

'What will you bet?'

'Anything you like.'

A very large wager having been made, Fuller hastened home to make sure. When he at last reached his lawn again he was staggered to find that the stranger was right: the church could not be seen. Such bets must not, however, be lost; masons were summoned, and in a few hours' time they had set up, on the skyline before the house, a reproduction of the spire's upper storey, so that when the challenger arrived he could be shown it, pay up, and be hurried back to town again before any investigation could begin. Such is the legend. Let us believe only that the hot-headed, masterful squire of Rose Hill prepared

the deception—and then confessed to it over a bottle, or even over several.

That is one explanation of this odd monument. Another has it that when Fuller built it his reason was still that it might be mistaken for the top of a spire, but not for the purposes of financial gain. His idea was that stranger-visitors, seeing it from his lawn, might exclaim: ‘What, another church! What a good man Jack Fuller must be!’ But this triumph would be so short-lived that I doubt the story.

I was amused by the way I fell, a hundred and more years late, into Jack Fuller’s trap. Between the shrubbery of Rose Hill Place and the church-yard there is a door, and I asked the sexton, at work sweeping the paths, if I might venture through for a peep of the house and view. He thought I might, and I did so, returning with the question: ‘I suppose that is the top of Dallington spire one sees from the lawn?’—a question which is meat and drink to this worthy man.

Fuller has many local memorials. He has the Needle; the Observatory; the pavilion in Rose Hill Park which he is said to have built for gambling in; the pyramidal tomb in the church-yard; the peal of bells in the church tower; and the tablet to his memory, surmounted by a bust (shorn, however, of the pigtail which he had clung to all his life), where we find once again, but this time in Latin, the iteration of his probity.

Lastly there is the organ which he presented to the church, together with, for the male members of the choir, white socks, buckskin breeches and yellow stockings and, for the female singers, red cloaks trimmed with black braid and white sun-bonnets. There is a story that, dissatisfied with the singing of the choir, the Squire provided minstrels with bassoons to drown its efforts; but this, I take it, would have preceded the organ and the fancy dress. The organ, I am told by one who knows, is the finest specimen of its kind —the church barrel-organ—that exists, with a tone that is ‘magnificent’.

Fuller’s charity or generosity did not remain at home; in addition to his £10,000 to the Royal Institution, he gave Eton College its copy of the Mazarin Bible, valued to-day at between thirty and forty thousand pounds.

It was Fuller who, as member of Parliament for Sussex, had in 1810 to be carried forcibly out of the House by the Serjeant-at-Arms’ officials, for first swearing at the Speaker and then refusing to obey him. The occasion was one calculated to excite the anger of a wilful overmastering Crœsus, for there was talk of emancipating the slaves of Jamaica, and it was from his plantations in that island that much of his money came. Ejecting the honourable member can have been no easy task, for he was of gigantic proportions; in fact, he was known as the Hippopotamus,

while when he had the honour to find his way into a sentence in one of the essays which Charles Lamb wrote for the *Reflector*—that on Guy Faux—he was referred to as Ursa Major. They got him, however, outside; but, impenitent to the last, he was heard protesting in his deep voice, as his bearers reached the door, that the insignificant little fellow in a wig—meaning the Speaker—was the servant, and not the master, of the House.

Fuller's parliamentary career, which lasted till 1812, was not wholly a joke or a brawl. In 1808 he brought in a Bill to prevent the spreading of smallpox by means of inoculation, and one of his relatives, John Fuller of Waldron and East Hoathly, was among the first to try this inoculation and to nurse the patients at the Lewes pest-house during an epidemic. In Lord Broughton's *Recollections of a Long Life* is an entry in his diary which shows Fuller under very favourable circumstances, both as a gentleman and a wit:

May 30 (1826). Went to Brooks', and sat up late talking, or, rather, listening, to anecdotes about Sheridan from Lord Cowper. Lord Cowper mentioned the anecdote of Jack Fuller, putting down Sheridan after his shabby conduct to the Duke of York. Sheridan had talked big about the slanderers of the Duke at the beginning of the accusation, and then stayed away, and even voted once against him. Jack Fuller declaimed against those who had been silent during the proceeding, after promising so much in favour of H.R.H.; and then, shaking his fist across the House at Sheridan, said, 'What! morality dumb,

too?' The hit [a reference to Joseph Surface in *The School for Scandal*] was palpable; the House cheered tremendously, and Sheridan sank into his very shoes.

After giving up Parliament altogether, Fuller settled down, for the rest of his life, to govern his immediate neighbourhood, to encourage Turner, to listen to music, to play cards, and to have a good time. He could have been Lord Brightling or anything he liked, for Pitt had offered him a peerage. But he refused. 'No,' he said as, having perused the Prime Minister's letter, he flung it in the fire, 'I was born Jack Fuller and Jack Fuller I'll die.' As Jack Fuller he died in 1834.

It was on my way back from Brightling towards Heathfield that my eye was caught by a memorial stone at the side of the road, which, when I came to examine it, I found to have been erected to the memory of the 'notorious rebel, Jack Cade, by Alexander Iden, Sheriff of Kent, A.D. 1450.' 'This', the stone-cutter continued, 'is the success of all rebels, and this fortune chanceth ever to traitors.' But there is an opening for doubt; I have heard both of rebels and traitors coming, in time, to receive high honours. Jack Cade, however, failed; and nothing fails like failure. Beyond question Cade, who was of Irish extraction, was a very loose fish, and his past did not bear scrutiny, but the grievance that he was out to protest against—extortions by the Crown officers—was

scandalously real. The trouble was that he was not the man to redress it.

The whole tragic business lasted only five or six weeks. At the end of May, Cade marched his followers to Blackheath, whither the King, Henry VI, himself led an army against them. Cade retreated to Sevenoaks, but when a detachment was sent in pursuit, destroyed it and killed its leaders. He then advanced as near London as Southwark, his headquarters being at the White Hart, and every day crossed London Bridge to harry the city and to reinforce his supporters by breaking open the prisons; while now and then, as an example, a high official was captured and beheaded. But by July, under the inducement of a general pardon, Cade was abandoned, while a reward of a thousand marks was set on his head.

It is then that Alexander Iden, the Sheriff, comes in. Cade, in disguise, made for the wooded country north of Lewes, all among the foundries and hammer ponds, and on July 12 Iden's men found him in a garden. Shakespeare in *Henry VI*, second part, places the garden in Kent, and, indeed, calls it Iden's garden; but it was near Heathfield in Sussex.

'Look on me well,' says Cade in the play; 'I have ate no meat these five days; yet, come thou and thy five men, and if I do not leave you all as dead as a door-nail I pray God I may never

eat grass more.' Iden, having replied in thirteen lines of blank verse, they fight till Cade is overcome, protesting it is famine and not his indifferent sword-play that has undone him. Iden having replied in six more lines of blank verse, Cade dies, in his last speech again declaring that his conqueror was his empty stomach.

The stone was put up, not by Sheriff Iden and not by King Henry's orders; in fact, for more than three centuries there was no local record of the event. The stone, when the time was ripe, was put up by the most peaceable of men, Francis Newbery, the publisher, who had bought Heathfield Park with wealth acquired less from books, although the popular Dr. Goldsmith was among his authors, than from patent medicines.

## FIRST AND LAST CASTLES

THE first time I saw Leeds castle was from the sky. The Paris-London aeroplane flew directly over it, and, looking down, I was amazed. A castle in a lake! I had heard of such wonders, but only in the realms of grand opera and fantasy. It is true that I knew Isola Bella in the Lago di Como, and the Armenian monastery in the Venetian lagoon; but such things are proper to Italy. The marvel was to find Leeds castle here, in little England, in domestic Kent. Since then I have seen it again and again from the road, where a clearing has been made for the view to be unobscured, and every time it is more magical. A fairy stronghold. Bodiam on the Sussex borders gives something of the same thrill, but Bodiam rises not from a lake but a moat, and there is a difference. The word moat has its romantic connotations: Mariana of the Moated Grange; but lake is more beautiful: the Lady of the Lake. A lake suggests space, swans, serenity; and when a grey mass of battlemented towers emerges

from its depths and is reflected in its placid surface it is incredible, unearthly. You rub your eyes.

Leeds, my latest castle, is one of the glories of Kent; all my early castles, with the exception of Corfe castle, were in Sussex, where there are many, from the solitary fragment rising on its mound, like a back-scratcher for Scottish cattle, which is all that remains of Knepp, to the spaciousness and modern perfection of Arundel. My very first was Bramber; but that also was only a wall, although a higher one, with a steep and deep moat filled with tangled undergrowth. There was little help towards reconstruction, but the position was fine; you could see why Sir William de Braose, who literally did come over with the Conqueror and was rewarded for his fidelity, set it there. My next was Lewes, which is far more of a fortress still, but also is a museum; which is bad. Castles should not be so trim, so well ordered. There may have to be entrance fees, but once inside you should be free to roam, as at Pevensey, which also came quite early in my life, and its neighbour Hurstmonceux, which in those days was a ruin, overgrown by ivy, the haunt of bats and owls, but is now a disciplined and luxurious abode once more. But Hurstmonceux did not impress my immature mind as Pevensey did. Hurstmonceux was red brick and in a hollow, and I wanted my castles

to be of grey stone and (not having then seen Leeds) on eminences.

Although, within, it was too tidy, Lewes castle was fittingly placed and it had a gateway that fulfilled every youthful wish. Hastings castle, although only a shell, stands higher still, and it was splendid to climb the hill and be blown about by the winds of the Channel. But I think we used to find Amberley the most exciting. None of the other Sussex castles had such a wall as that northern one which rises sheer from the marshes. There was something very seductive, too, in the unexpectedness of the green lawn that took the place of all the ancient bustle. I made acquaintance (from Littlehampton, as a variation on paddling) with Amberley and Arundel at the same time; but Arundel was not quite right: it was guarded by custodians, and was new as well as old, and it could be visited only at fixed times. Yet how nobly it stands on the bluff above the Arun, own cousin to Windsor itself, above the Thames!

Corfe castle, in Dorset, before I saw it, had been made real by an anonymous story for children about a siege there in the days of Roundheads and Cavaliers, entitled *Brave Dame Mary*. Since then I have seen it several times, always with new admiration. The Château d'Arques near Dieppe is not dissimilar and covers more ground. Both are on a hill, as a castle should

be—always excepting Leeds the unbelievable—and both are easily re-peopled by the mind's eye: the villagers pouring in for safety, in an anxious stream; the assailants with their ladders and rams; the defenders with their boiling oil and 'bubbling lead and bows and arrows and battle-axes. A castle was carried by the foe very thoroughly in the Aldershot Tattoo two or three years ago, and from my old experience at Corfe and Arques I knew the tactics to be right.

Windsor, except that the idea of assault and defence is missing, I still think the ideal castle. Its position is right, its size and formation are right, its function is right: to house the King. I never see it from the Bath road between Slough and the turning to Datchet without a thrill, and I never fail to look down that long straight lane in Slough itself, with the castle closing the vista, and reflect upon the time when this was probably one of the ways by which royal hunting parties set forth. Americans are to be envied their first sight of Windsor castle as much as anything.

Windsor castle, thanks to Harrison Ainsworth, is famous in prose; the Castle of Chillon (one of my latest discoveries) is famous in poetry—for it was there that François Bonivard, Byron's hero, was immured between 1530 and 1536. You see a marble figure of him in the garden, you visit the cell where he lay, you may

buy a Swiss reprint of Byron's poem, full of mistakes, at the *boutique* in the grounds. Chillon, like Leeds, rises from water: but the water is that of the Lake of Geneva. It frowns at you across Leman as you come in from Lausanne, grey and forbidding. But to realize its strength it is necessary to penetrate to the dungeons where the massive arches and the rock unite. Byron's Bonivard and the Bonivard of reality are far from identical; you would not, for instance, suppose that the Prisoner of the poem, having gained his liberty, lived thirty-four years more, became a Protestant, married four times, was so extravagant as to be always in debt, and was appointed official historian of Geneva. Such a sequel to a cruel incarceration is not impossible; but Byron does not exactly pave the way to it. He is, however, most misleading when he makes Bonivard say that such were the waves of the lake, under a high wind, that 'then the very rock hath rocked'. This I shall never believe.

Every one staying at Strasbourg has to visit the Château of Haut-Koenigsbourg, that twelfth-century fortress on one of the peaks of the Vosges which, a ruin thirty years ago, was restored to its condition of ancient splendour by the Emperor William II, the ex-Kaiser, to whom, in 1899, it was presented as a gift by the municipality of Sélestat, the nearest town. No doubt the eager burghers thought they were doing a very

clever imaginative thing; but as they watched year after year the work of renovation going on and periodically were asked, together with all Alsace, for grant after grant to defray the enormous cost, they perhaps changed their minds. By 1908 the undertaking was complete and the place a habitation again, although 2,477 feet up on its mountain-top. The Kaiser never lived there, never even slept there, but he paid occasional visits to see how his architect, Herr Bodo Ebhardt, was getting on, and not improbably to make suggestions; and you see the antlered room, with 'Gott mit Uns' on the ceiling, where he ate. Little did he think, in those exuberant days, that on November 20, 1918, French officers would be eating there too. Or did he? for some time during the War he had his famous exculpatory phrase, 'I never willed it', incised on one of the mantelpieces.

The restoration is not historical. It represents the taste of one described in the official (French) guide-book as 'a megalomaniac prince of the twentieth century'. Viollet le Duc, who surveyed the ruins for his *Dictionnaire Raisonné d'Architecture*, would probably have done very differently. But the result is noble and impressive and the view from the grand bastion over the plain of the Rhine is amazing.

Although the visit to the Haut-Koenigsbourg is one of the essential Strasbourg excursions, it

does not come first; the first is to the convent of St. Odille, patron saint of Alsace, on a neighbouring Vosgian summit. St. Odille, I should say, was, in her real life, in the seventh century, very unlike the athletic and skittish young woman whose adventures are related in one of the least successful of the *Ingoldsby Legends*—which gives probably the only information about her that most of us possess. In fact, for a wrong impression Barham may here be bracketed with Byron at Chillon, except that the Canon of St. Paul's is far less historical.

Odille was devout and before she was nine  
 Had 'experienced a call' she considered divine  
 To put on a veil at St. Ermengarde's shrine.  
 Lords, Dukes and Electors and Counts Palatine  
 Came to seek her in marriage from both sides of the Rhine.  
 But vain their design,  
 They are left all to pine,  
 Their oglings and smiles are all useless; in fine  
 Not one of these gentlefolks, try as they will,  
 Can draw 'Ask my papa' from the cruel Odille.

That hardly conveys the right atmosphere, for St. Odille, who was born blind but miraculously gained her sight, founded the convent at an early age, and, at the head of three hundred nuns, was famous for her austerity and piety.

My absolutely latest castle has two advantages over the other two. One is that it has been left entirely to the mercy of Time; it is a ruin, whereas

Chillon has been made into something very like a museum, with conjectural repainting of the old frescoes and replicas of antique furniture, and Haut-Koenigsbourg was always ready for the occupation of its imperial owner, now the Exile of Doorn. The second advantage is that there is no accompanying guide. At Chillon I found myself in the midst of a company of about fifty schoolboys and schoolgirls, with a sprinkling of older tourists, and we were conducted from room to room by a Swiss lady speaking very good English in the French idiom. At Haut-Koenigsbourg there is a staff of what are probably ex-soldiers to herd and direct, very mechanical in manner. But at Beaufort, in Luxembourg, there is no formality; no eye to avoid. You pay your franc to an old man firmly rooted to his chair at the entrance, and forthwith are made free of this glorious thirteenth-century fortress, which a film producer has but to see to convert instantly into a background. Luxembourg, considering its size, has a totally disproportionate number of castles, but Beaufort is the one whose memory I most cherish. So far as I know, no poet has trifled with it, but there is an extremely eligible little dungeon where any unfortunate man might have languished and led to verse.

## THE THREE ATTEMPTS

THE Belgians like their lunch. I am prompted to this statement by my experience at the frontier barrier at Abele the first time that I made an effort to visit post-war Ypres. It was in 1930, and I set forth from Calais in a car duly provided with the official permit; but, having for the moment lost sight of the requirements and sense of punctuality of the Belgian abdomen, I dallied so long on the top of Mont Cassel beside Foch's monument—that horseman in the sky—that when Abele was reached the clock said five minutes after twelve and the road was closed. The chief of the staff having gone to his midday meal, no one could pass until his return at two. Entreaties, threats and suggestions of important State business at Brussels were equally futile; the exhibition of British passports led only to shrugs; and therefore, since there was no prospect of food at the deplorable inn grandly styled Hôtel St. Eloi Marquis-Trybon, we had to return to Cassel for lunch and thence find our way by the same dreary road to Calais.

So much for the first attempt. The next day I set forth again, this time by way of Lille, drawn thither by tidings of a restaurant where one could eat well—true tidings, as it happened—and after an early lunch we arrived a minute or so past two, at the frontier barrier on the Lille-Ypres road, the name of which I forget—either Quesnoy, or near it—anticipating no more difficulty, since all the staff would surely be fed. But no. It seems that while one of the soldiers on duty at Abele on the previous day was pointing out the impossibility of our passing through, another was being prematurely and fussily busy with his rubber stamp, and the permit could not be used elsewhere until the Abele sanction or half-sanction was cancelled. Again entreaties and threats were unavailing; and we had to return once more to Calais on strictly French roads.

So much for the second attempt to see the Menin Gate—my real objective. But a year later, in 1931, furnished with a new triptyque, as the car permit is called, I tried again, arranging the expedition with such care that nothing but a serious accident could prevent arrival at Abele before the deadly lunch gong sounded. Level crossings, wagons laden with tree-trunks, a wedding party at Cassel, a funeral at St. Omer, and the leisurely French officials at the Steepworde barrier, all did their worst; but at five minutes to twelve we were at

Abele, to be almost welcomed by a genial Belgian soldier with both hands in his pockets and a heavy revolver case at his side who was leaning against the yellow-striped post from which depended the tattered flag of his country. Yes, he said, we were in time, but if we had been five minutes later we should have had no luck—so the tyrant of the piece was still putting appetite first! Does no one write to the papers in the casual land of the Belge? Is there in Belgium no one to sign himself 'Pro bono publico', 'Civitas', or 'Fair Play'? Be that as it may, we got through, and to the question whether or not it was essential to return by the same way the sentry replied, without removing his cigarette, that if it pleased us we could re-enter France by Germany or Spain.

The third attempt had succeeded, and at last we were on Belgian soil, among curious little hop-gardens with slanting poles, and inn signs in the strange Vlamisch tongue. The country is flat and sad; new houses or new roofs abound, telling their tale of woe; Poperinghe (or Pop), although largely rebuilt, was so insensitive to the recent past that at the principal cinema 'All Quiet on the Western Front' was being given. And so to Ypres; but if I had known how melancholy and tawdry and catchpenny is the Ypres of to-day I should never have made such efforts. More moving than the grief for what has gone.

for ever, shattered and scattered by bombardment, is the recoil from what has taken its place. For the newness of Ypres is ugly and vulgar. I do not say this of the cathedral, where heroic pains have been taken and the material carefully chosen, although the tower carrying the steeple seems to me to be inadequate and to have been set too near the chancel. But the bricks employed for new houses and public buildings are hideous, chiefly yellow, and the façades have a jauntiness that is almost a blow.

The restoration of the Cloth Hall seems to me a mistake; I would have enclosed its broken columns and crumbled walls and arches for ever, as a memorial of the thoughtlessness, wantonness, and wickedness of war. To be patching those old medieval bricks with modern white stone is absurd. But the whole spirit of the place is discordant, with its commercialization of bereavement. If only there could be no picture postcards, no taxis with maps of the cemeteries spread against their bonnets and busy touts in attendance, no crowded charabancs, no 'English spoken' notices, no meretricious restaurants, no windows congested with the cigarettes of all nations; nothing but the forlorn silent vestiges of the Cloth Hall and the grandeur and dignity of the Hall of Memory and the Menin Gate! But one is always asking too much.

The Menin Gate, approached from the centre

of the town, rises massively to fill the vista and lead to the open world. The monument—Sir Reginald Blomfield's—dominated by its lion—Mr. Reid Dick's—was a fine conception, finely carried out, and the cumulative effect of the names incised on its stones is overwhelming. It is a temple of names; thousands and thousands of names. So many names I have never seen: names of the young and brave and trustworthy, all sacrificed and lost in this region of the War. It was a great idea to keep their fame sweet in these soaring corridors; and to hear the Last Post sounding and echoing there, as it does every evening, must be heart-breaking.

I returned to Calais by way of Furnes and Dunquerque, with a *détour* to the watering-place of De Panne or La Panne, where the King and Queen of the Belgians lived during the War. All *plages* are, out of season, depressing—and sometimes in—and a northern shore is not ideal, but I could see, in my mind's eye, these grey sands being very cheerful under an August sun. It is cheap, too. I had tea at one of the hotels which keep open all the year round, and was given so many francs in change for a pound note that I came away feeling far less like a customer than a successful bandit. And then, at the French frontier, having passed the Belgian with the simplest formality (the speeding of the parting guest being a trifle compared with his recep-

tion), I had the pleasure of watching a vigilant *douanier* remove from beneath the cushions of the car immediately in front of me several hundreds of cigarettes, and lead the discredited undeclaring motorist to the bureau like a lamb to the slaughter. At the same time—for the road runs beside a canal—the officer's colleagues were plunging investigatory rods into the cargo of one of the million barges that gather on these northern waterways.

And so we entered France once more, and I was cheered to notice on a roadside auberge over the border the friendly sign, 'Au Bon Accueil'.

## BOTH THE MASKS

THE following story, as told to me by a famous musician, shows how tragedy can turn to comedy. Its scene is a northern London suburb.

In a certain typical household—that is to say, consisting of father, mother and children—there dwells a cat, who, fulfilling the law of increase, not long since put into an overcrowded world her first contribution.

There were five kittens to choose from; and only one could be kept, for the law of selection is a powerful law too.

The fiat having gone forth, the old struggle began.

‘Oh, but, Dad, they’re so pretty; couldn’t we have two?’

‘No, only one. And we’ll give that away as soon as it’s old enough.’

‘What a shame! They’re such tinies. Couldn’t we keep two?’

‘No, only one.’

‘Oh, but, Dad!’

'Only one.'

Into a pail the other four therefore went, later to be extracted and set aside for the arrival of the municipal dustman.

In due course he came.

"Ere, wot's these?"

"These?" said the cook. 'Kittens, of course. What did you think they were? Elephants? Poor little mites! Did you ever see anything so small?"

'Well, wot about it?"

"They're dead, poor little things! Drowned. Please take them away."

'Me? Not me! We can't put things like that in our carts. Drowned kittens isn't dust or rubbish within the meaning of the ack. No, missus, you must bury them. Them as drowns, buries.'

'But there's no garden here.'

'I'm sorry, but I didn't plan the place. You must take them to somebody else's garden.'

'Who, me?'

'Why not?'

'Me, carry four dead kittens to some one else's garden! Me! And where should I get a trowel too? You're off your head. I'm a cook, I am.'

'Well, then, the other one can do it. The red-headed one.'

'You mean the housemaid. I'd like to see her. Here, Agnes, come and listen to the dustman.'

He says you're to take the kittens away and bury them.'

But Agnes was equally firm. Agnes wouldn't demean herself like that. Besides, she didn't hold with kittens anyway. Not in towns. All right and proper in the country, very likely, but not in towns. If she had her way, cats would be forbidden in towns. Yes, and dogs too.

The dustman listened, but was not moved to relent. 'Sweet Auburn' may have attracted him but not to that extent. 'Your job, not mine,' was his ultimatum.

When a report of the dustman's decision was carried to the mistress she was indignant but not surprised. Resignedly so.

'It's no use expecting any one to do anything these days,' she said. 'Wouldn't he have taken them away for sixpence?'

'I didn't feel justified in offering it him.'

'Ask him to-morrow.'

'But they oughtn't to stay there till to-morrow. Not by rights.'

'No, perhaps not.' A silence. 'I suppose . . . No, I'm sure you wouldn't. Nor Agnes. It would be too much to ask either of you. And not quite fair. No, I'll do it myself.'

'Wouldn't the master . . . ?'

'The master won't be home till much too late. No, there's only one way to get things done and that is to do them oneself.'

A heavy sigh. Another silence.

'Will that be all, Mum?'

'That will be all.'

'Thank you, Mum.'

The mistress, still sighing, went to a cupboard where old, but not too old, articles were kept, selected a handbag which had seen better days, and that evening slipped the four poor little unwanted lumps of fur into it and went forth.

Her purpose was, under cover of the dark, to drop the bag in some one else's front garden or even down an area and hasten away.

This sounds like a simple enough proceeding in a London suburb in the dark, but on the night in question everything made it difficult. The street lamps came at the wrong places; other people never quite disappeared; the policemen seemed to be preternaturally suspicious.

Still worse, two friends of her husband recognized her at different points of her walk and offered to see her safely back again. Repulsing such friendly overtures was, she discovered, the most embarrassing thing she had ever had to do.

After several failures and with an ever-growing sense of guilt, and not only of guilt but of the guilt that shows, she gave in. Too risky. What a dreadful position would be hers if she were caught and prosecuted and those horrid newspapers worked the case up! How furious her husband would be! Yes, and justly.

## MARSEILLES AND MARTIGUES

MOST English people who visit Marseilles are there only as birds of passage, either on their way to the East or—that much less agreeable enterprise, at any rate in winter,—returning from it. They may be there for a night or for the inside of a day; rarely longer, and most of that time they spend in the seething polyglot Cannebière. Yet Marseilles is one of the most amusing cities in the world and the key to some very good, as well as very wild, country. Compared with it, Nice and Cannes are like anæmic suburbs.

It is odd that the most famous man connected with Marseilles, Rouget de Lisle, author of the 'Marseillaise', had no association with the city at all. So far as I can ascertain he was never there, nor was the most popular local fish, the rouget, or red mullet, named after him. Claude Joseph Rouget de Lisle was born in 1760 at Lons-le-Saunier, as far away from the ancient Phocæan colony as the department of Jura, and, having a turn for rhyming, a gift of music, and a readiness to be inflamed by the new spirit, he wrote and

composed, at Strasbourg in 1792, a 'Chant de Guerre de l'Armée du Rhin'. Its sentiment and fine aggressive melody made it popular, and when a band of lawless Provençal troops, chiefly from Marseilles, under Barbaroux, advanced on Paris and stormed the Tuileries, it was to this song that they marched. Hence it became known, and feared, as the 'Marseillaise', and hence most people think to-day that it was the fiery patriotism of the South which gave it birth. But no.

Rouget de Lisle had to go to prison for it, but he was liberated and lived peacefully, but often in great distress, vainly endeavouring to write anything else that should be memorable, until 1836, when he died at Choisy-le-Roi. It is one of the finest passages in the life of that brave and more successful song-writer, Béranger, that when, after years of adversity, and even imprisonment, he was offered rewards by Louis Philippe, he asked nothing for himself but a pension for Rouget de Lisle, whom for some time he had been supporting. Another generous artistic friend of the minstrel firebrand was David d'Angers, the sculptor, who, hearing of one of his sad plights, hastened to his bedside, modelled him there and then, turned him quickly into marble and, forcing on his friends lottery tickets for the completed work, was able to raise eighteen hundred francs for Rouget's momentary well-being.

To the majority of us, whether we are English

or French, the word Marseilles is bracketed not only with 'Marseillaise', but with bouillabaisse, for though this excellent, if filling, fish stew is also made elsewhere, Marseilles has the first name for it, and I think, although saffron is an acquired taste, I like it best done in the Marseilles manner. The most famous resort for it for many years—long enough ago to have been flourishing in the time of *Monte Cristo*—has been Isnard's; but let me warn the reader that although Isnard's is still there, and still select and trustworthy, the house nourishes a tradition of reserve which is extremely chilling to the guest. That '*bon accueil*' of which the French *hôtelier* is commonly so proud, and which with his histrionic skill he can make so convincing, is, *chez* Isnard, totally lacking. Not only are the English aware of it; even the lively French, between their courses, are hushed. On mentioning the matter to the chief French authority on eating-places, he told me with a shrug that Marseilles was like that; but that Isnard's carried the fault to perfection.<sup>1</sup>

There is a French painter who is associated with evening light on the coloured sails of fishing boats as closely as Henner with gleaming

<sup>1</sup> As all the other restaurants are large and noisy, I think you must put up with the Isnard manner. Otherwise try the Brasserie de Verdun, where the Stock Exchange magnates go. But remember that bouillabaisse is at Marseilles a lunch dish. If you want it for dinner at either of these restaurants you must order it.

nudes, Bougereau with pink nudes, Corot with alders, Monet with poplars, Sisley with snow, or, to come nearer home, Peter Graham with Highland cattle, Farquharson with Scotch sheep, Davis with English sheep, Sidney Cooper with cows, and Alma Tadema with marble. His name is Félix Ziem, and you will find a room in his honour at the Petit Palais in Paris. His chief painting was done, and exhibited, in Venice, but he loved Martigues too, the little harbour-town about thirty miles west of Marseilles, and if it is called 'The Venice of Provence' the reason not improbably is that Ziem's brush made it famous. There is cause enough for the style, for Martigues is situated on a canal uniting the sea to an inland lagoon, the Etang de Barre. Félix François Georges Philibert Ziem, who was born in 1821 and died in 1911, painted here long and lovingly, and in return Martigues has given him a museum. A young English artist of peculiar fascination for me, whose method is as far removed from that of Ziem as well may be, has also discovered Martigues, and has already made good use of her: Mr. Bertram Nicholls.

Except the road to Aix, there is no outlet from Marseilles that does not climb a wilderness of rocks, beyond all taming. The road to Martigues is no exception, and it were better to take the rail, or in summer one of the motor-boats. Given plenty of time and a good car

the road is more interesting, and it keeps along the shore for quite a long way. Pausing at one of the little water-side towns where the Marseillais go for lunch on Sundays, I noticed a novelty in the shape of a floating raft large enough for two full-size lawn-tennis courts and an umpire's perch between them. Where storms are not a danger this device seems to solve the problem of space very ingeniously; both for players and spectators. I commend it to the notice of dwellers beside the Thames and to the municipality of Southampton.

Martigues knows no such refinements, for every one there is hard-working, and most draw their livelihood from the deep rather than disport themselves on the surface. I found, however, on the Quai des Anglais, a little company of fishermen relaxing at bowls: the Provençal variety of the game, where no prepared ground is essential, but any piece of road will do, and it doesn't matter if there are tram-lines. What an English bowler—cherishing his woods in a leather case with his initials on it and changing into rubber shoes lest he impair the perfection of the green—would make of these impromptu contests, liable at any moment, however critical, to the interruption of traffic, I hardly dare think. But when it comes to the seriousness of the struggle and the intensity of partisanship, we have nothing to brag about.

## SACRED BIRDS

ONE of the strangest sights that met these frustrated eyes during the soaking period of August and September of 1931 was, near Storrington in Sussex, a dry pond. How any pond could be dry at a time when even scientifically drained cricket pitches were under water was a problem that I made no effort to solve. Enough that something was dry! And what increased the oddity of the spectacle was a pair of swans, evidently denizens of the spot, still pathetically lingering on in the hope of a return of their tide. There they sat, on the mud, without refreshment, without joy, without purpose; foolishly faithful. Even if they knew of a better pond, they were unwilling to go to it. And as I glanced at them and took in the significance of their plight and their amazing isolation in a drowning world, I thought very vividly of one of the better ponds that I had myself seen only a week or so before in the course of zigzags about the Continent: none other than the Lake of Geneva, where swans have a sanctity not less

inviolable than that of the Egyptian ibis or the Benares cow. They are not even nicked, as the swans of the Thames, chartered aristocrats though they are, have to be.

I watched these swans from various sections of Leman's shores, but nowhere did they seem to be in greater comfort or to be held in higher honour than at Lausanne, where the energies of masons have been called upon to provide them not only with a nesting-place, constructed, just off the pier-head, of huge boulders, but with a break-water as well. I doubt if a pair of swans ever had such a luxurious stronghold; and when I say a pair it is to distinguish them from the vast concourse of those superb, disdainful and glistening beings which are cared for so solicitously by Lord Ilchester's keepers in the Swannery at Abbotsbury. It is single spies and not battalions in which I am at the moment most interested. There is even at Lausanne a curved pathway leading up from the depths to make it easier to gain the nest, and while I was leaning over the side of the Evian steamboat watching the châtelaine conversing with her brood of cygnets, their modest grey contrasting with her resplendent white, the father, paying one of his brief visits, made use of this inclined plane, by its aid advancing upon his young with a dignity that might have been lacking had he been forced to flap. Very thoughtful of the Lausanne harbour authori-

ties, I reflected; for in these days anything that can induce children to think less contemptuously of their parents is to the good.

The Lausanne swans were the first of my sacred birds. The second were far more exciting; for any one may see a swan, practically every day, whereas, except in illustrations to German and Danish fairy-tales, how many of us have seen a stork on its nest on the top of a house? But passing on from Switzerland to Alsace I came almost at once to one of these eyries, with two birds on it, one sitting and one standing, exactly as in the picture-books. These storks were in an ancient village near Colmar, called Turckheim: or, to be more accurate, an ancient-and-modern village, for before you come to the medieval gateway leading to Turckheim itself, you pass a line of factories. These are of to-day; but once through the gateway on the top of which dwell the benign birds, you are in the past, eating your lunch in a rambling hostelry, filled with pewter and oak, dating from the sixteenth century. To come upon the stork (who, for all his benignity, can be productive of embarrassment) so near Colmar was fitting enough, for I have long known in France a delicious Riesling bottled at Colmar, with a stork as its trade-mark: a wine of the Moselle type, dry and fragrant, but a poor traveller. The colder it is when you drink it, the better.

I was glad at last to be in Alsace, because, although it is too many years since I read them, I still have the pleasantest memories of the Erckmann-Chatrian stories: their village scenes, their tender human touches, their pretty girls, their simple peasants, their cordial wine, their abundant meals. And every few miles I came upon names that I remembered, such as Mutzig, on the camions carrying beer, for Mutzig, a great brewing centre to-day, was the place to which the murdered man in *The Polish Jew* was going when he left Mathias, his murderer, at the inn—Mathias, whom Irving used to portray so shudderingly in *The Bells*.

Whether the decrease in the number of storks in Alsace is due to a recoil on the part of the new French from German tradition I cannot say, but there are now few compared with their profusion in the pages of Erckmann-Chatrian, where the parents are always flying home with their beaks full of frogs or lizards. Strasbourg claims the bird as its emblem and fills its souvenir shops, of which there is a vast number, with every kind of representation of it, for trippers like me to carry away. Were the author of *Fécondité* still active, perhaps every gabled roof would again be dominated by these long-legged guardians. In any case the stork is a migratory bird and this was not his season; but I saw in the surrounding meadows many geese, far from sacred, although

highly esteemed, whose future lay in *pâtés*, but I most carefully refrained from visiting any establishment for the enlargement of their poor livers.

Having digressed to Erckmann-Chatrian, let me say that I made a point of seeing Phalsburg, the background of many of their stories, and particularly of *The Blockade*, and the birthplace of Emil Erckmann. I saw the little house where, on May 22, 1822, he was born, and I saw the monument which was set up in honour of the two collaborators exactly a century later, with their features incised upon it. Erckmann, the son of a bookseller, proposed to be a lawyer; Louis Gratien Charles Alexandre Chatrian, by four years his junior, the son of a glass-blower, taught in the village school. When Erckmann was twenty-five and Chatrian twenty-one, they decided that they could do better jointly, with their pens, and accordingly formed the most famous of modern literary partnerships. From 1847 until the late eighties they continued amicably to collaborate, Erckmann being the principal creative writer, and Chatrian representing the business side of the firm. But in 1889 came a rift within the lute, which not only made the music mute, but led to the law courts. Erckmann won, and Chatrian survived only a few months. It was indeed a pity, and I was glad to see them re-united, if only in stone. Until the quarrel they had been the best of friends, although,

or perhaps because, their characters and temperaments were so dissimilar: Erckmann being jovial and stout and a great trencherman, Chatrian reserved and ascetic; Erckmann never happy except when he could return to Phalsburg, Chatrian better pleased with the Paternoster Row of Paris; Erckmann inventing and embroidering, Chatrian examining and corroborating. Erckmann was surely the predominant partner in that modern version of Don Quixote, *The Illustrious Dr. Mathéus*, where historical data mattered nothing. They were never men of genius, but their talents were admirably managed and they had enough originality to invent a new genre, the regional romance, which found many imitators. But probably their greatest service was to withdraw the deceptive mask of unreality from the malignant face of war, which they did again and again, but most noticeably in the historical novels beginning with *The Conscript*. What they chiefly lacked was form, and this is particularly noticeable in their short stories; but if I were making an anthology of such productions I should think long before rejecting their *Burgomaster in a Bottle*, in spite of its very Continental ending.

And my third sacred bird? Well, it is to be doubted if sacred is quite the right term, although his addiction to the Church is testified to by such authorities as Vincent Bourne, the Westminster master and Latinist, and the Rev. Richard Harris

Barham, Canon of St. Paul's, better known as Thomas Ingoldsby. I refer to the jackdaw, and I don't expect to be believed when I say that the first morning after my arrival at Rheims, homing from Strasbourg, I was awakened by a jackdaw's cry; but when I came, later in the morning, to the cathedral itself, never a glimpse or sound of this bird could I get. It is unlikely that every one of them has left, although not impossible, as a protest against the German bombardment or even from uncomplicated personal fear; but I did not find out.

As for the German bombardment, the actual damage done has been overrated, for the west front, with all its riot of statuary of mixed styles and scale, is intact. In the east, however, there has had to be rebuilding, still in progress. But the actual destruction of fabric is not all: there is a subtler enemy than the obus, and enough anti-Christian influence has been at work to change the cathedral entirely, at least to my consciousness. It is still august, impressive; the white columns still climb gloriously to the distant roof; but something has gone, and something not to be accounted for solely by the new wall of the foreshortened choir: something mystical, something romantic, something human. On the sodden morning that I was there (for it was raining at Rheims as at Storrington) the Cathedral was empty save for the organist trying over some

plangent liturgical melody; but not even these wailing notes could restore the ancient spirit. The Rheims cathedral of old, the cathedral of the jackdaw, has gone. If that is any satisfaction to Germany, let her hug it.

## BREAKING-POINT

I USED, a long time ago, when I frequented a certain restaurant, to have a favourite waiter —an Italian, from the province of Venezia. But somehow my beat changed, and I went there no more and forgot him.

But recently, while waiting for a train at the Temple station, I met him again, unchanged except that he was not in evening clothes. We recognized each other with a satisfaction that was mutual. (Would, I thought, that I had, in these lean times, some of those tips in my pocket once more!)

'Are you still at the old place?' I asked him.

'Oh, no,' he said. 'Not-a for three year-a. No, I am my own boss now.'

'Good,' I said, 'and doing well, I hope?'

'Yes,' he said, 'I mustn't complain-a.'

'But you liked being a waiter?' I suggested. 'You were a very good one, I remember. I'm afraid I tried you a lot with my impatience and irritability, but you were very forgiving.'

'You were not-a the worst,' he conceded. 'It was a pleasure to look after you even when . . . '

'Yes, even when . . .' I said. 'I apologize.'

'If all were like-a you,' he said, 'I should perhaps be a waiter there still. Who knows? But there was something I could-a not stand. I stood it for a long, long time and then I said, "No more-a. Finito." And I left.'

'What was that?'

'The joke,' he said. 'The English joke.'

At this moment our train came in and we found seats together.

'Tell me,' I said, 'about the English joke. Which one?'

'*The* one,' he replied. 'The one that every waiter has-a to put up with and laugh at. Always, everywhere—in London, in Manchester, in Worthing, in all places I have worked at. You can't guess?'

I confessed to failure.

'Well,' he said, 'the gentleman ask-a what is good and I say, as all waiters are taught to say, "A nice sole." He agree. So the sole is ordered and the gentleman talk-a with his friends. After a little while he ask-a, "Where is that sole?" and I say, as all waiters are taught to say, "Two minutes. Two minutes and it will be here." It is then that he make-a the English joke. "I suppose-a", he say, "they catch-a the fish?" Always, everywhere, they say that: "I suppose-a they catch-a the fish," and he laugh and I laugh and his friends laugh. Then I fetch-a the sole and they eat it.'

'Day after day,' he went on, 'year after year I hear-a that joke and force-a the laugh. It is not always the fish. Sometime it is the bird. They order the partridge and he take some time and then the gentleman, very angry, ask-a, "Where is that partridge?" and I say, "Two minutes," and he say, "I suppose-a they shoot-a the bird?"' and again he laugh and his friends laugh and I laugh. But no more. Finito. One day something terrible happen.'

'Be quick,' I said, for my station was the next.

'The English ladies,' he said, 'you have notice, become more independent, more like-a the man?'

'I have indeed,' I said.

'Well,' he continued, 'this joke was a man's joke at first, but one day a lady she say it too. "I suppose-a they catch-a the fish?"' She laugh and her friends laugh, but this time I—I could not laugh. It was too much. A lady! It was the end. No sooner was their lunch over than I gave-a the notice.'

'That was very rash,' I suggested.

'Oh, no. It was time. I had save-a the mun and I bought-a the good-will of a fish-and-chips business at Islington.'

'More fish!' I exclaimed. 'But wasn't that rather risky? Would you not be in danger of hearing the joke again?'

'No,' he said: 'the fish-a and chips they are always ready.'

## SQUIRE AND WHIPPER-IN

THE fact that the names of certain favourite gun-dogs were recently mentioned in a hunting man's will seems to have filled one at any rate of London's sub-editors with surprise, for he gave it a bold headline. The bequest ran: 'Three hundred pounds to my gamekeeper, in memory . . . of those great dogs he trained and worked for us up there [at Glenfernate, Blairgowrie]: Factor, Cronje, Stella, Sailor, and all the others.' But surely this honour to dogs is not so new as to be remarkable. It is occurring every day; while as long ago as the eighteenth century the famous Squire Forester of Willey, in Shropshire, was having his favourite hounds painted and a eulogistic quatrain put under each picture. Thus, under Pigmy's portrait in 1773:

Behold in miniature the foxhound keen,  
Thro' rough and smooth a better ne'er was seen ;  
As champion here the beauteous Pigmy stands,  
She challenges the globe, both home and foreign lands.

And under Savory's, also in 1773:

Ye that remember well old Savory's call,  
With pleasure view'd her, as she passed you all;  
In distant countries still her fame resounds,  
The huntsman's glory and the pride of hounds.

While of old Childers, who died in 1772, the poet says:

Reynard with dread oft heard his awful name.

Squire Forester, who owned these hounds and saw to their fitting celebration, bred them himself. Among his letters are two or three bearing upon his kennels. Thus, to Mr. Walter Stubbs of Beckbury, in 1795: 'I have sent you as a present a little bitch of ye Grafton kind which I call Whymesy, lately taken up from quarters and coming a year old. She's rather under-size for me, or otherwise I see not her fault. She's in my opinion a true Nonpareil. Your acceptance of her from me now, and any other hound of ye Grafton sort that may come in near her size, will afford me singular satisfaction; as I make it a rule that no man who shows me civility shall find me wanting in making a proper return.'—So did gentlemen and sportsmen treat each other in that distant day.

Squire Forester—of whom you may read in a book published in 1873, exactly a hundred years after the death of Pigmy and Savory, written by

a Shropshire antiquary named John Randall and called *Old Sports and Sportsmen*,—was chiefly famous for his hunting exploits, his patriarchal generosities, his conviviality and his amours. But he sat in Parliament for the borough of Wenlock for thirty years, active for any measure that came up affecting his own county, and twice he was instrumental in raising local bands of volunteers. The first, the Wenlock Loyal Volunteers, was brought together soon after the French Revolution, and a few sentences from the Squire's rallying speeches will show what manner of orator he was. 'As I told the Lord-Lieutenant the other day,' he said, 'we must have not less than four or five thousand men in uniform, equipped, every Jack-rag of them, without a farthing cost to the country. There are some dastardly devils who run with the hare but hang with the hounds, damn them, whose patriotism, by God, hangs by such a small strand that I believe the first success of the enemies of the country would sever it. They are a lot of damnation Jacobins, all of them, whining blackhearted devils with distorted intellects, who profess to perceive no danger. And by God the more plain it is, the less they see it.' (Cries of 'Bravo!' 'Hurrah for the Squire.')

When the Wenlock Loyal Volunteers were disbanded in 1802 they gave the Squire, their commandant, a handsome punch bowl, presented to him at a suitable banquet, and thought that was

the end of war and trouble; but almost immediately afterwards came the Boney invasion scare of which Randal Norris used to sing, and the Second Wenlock Loyal Volunteers had to be enrolled. During this task ‘the Squire had the women on his side, and he worked upon the men through the women. There was open house at Willey, and no baron of olden time dealt out hospitality more willingly or more liberally. The Squire was here, there, and everywhere, visiting neighbouring squires, giving or receiving information, stirring up the gentry and frightening country people out of their wits’.

It is not only on his own account that Squire Forester was famous, but as employer of Tom Moody the whipper-in, the subject of a very popular song beginning:

You all know Tom Moody, the whipper-in, well.

Tom Moody, pronounced Muddy, was the hero of three or four very well-known and highly treasured engravings, two of which depict his funeral, one called ‘Gone to Earth’, and one where you see his wraith seated on his horse even as his coffin is lowered. He was what, Mr. Randall says, is called ‘foxy’, all over—in his language, dress, and associations. ‘He wore a pin with a knob something smaller than a tea-saucer, of Caughley china, with the head of a fox upon it. A small eight or nine stone man, with a

roundish face, marked with smallpox, and a pair of eyes that twinkled with good humour. He and his horse seemed one . . . Tom's voice was something extraordinary, capable of wonderful modulations, and to hear him rehearse the sports of the day in the big, roomy servants' kitchen at the Hall, and give his tally-ho or who-who-hoop, was considered a treat. Like the old Squire, Tom never married, although, like his master, he had a leaning towards the softer sex.' He had a spark in his throat, as he said, and he indulged in frequent libations to extinguish it.

In 1796 Tom Moody prematurely died. The Squire, in a letter to a friend, told the news. 'I am sole executor and the bulk of his fortune he left to me—six-and-twenty shillings, real and bona-fide sterling cash, free from all incumbrance, after every debt discharged to a farthing. . . . The poor old ladies at the Ring of Roses are to have a knot each in remembrance of the poor old lad. Directly after the corpse followed his old favourite horse (which he always called his "Old Soul") carrying his last fox's brush in front of the bridle. The ceremony being over, he (by his own desire) had three rattling view-halloos o'er his grave; and thus ended the career of poor Tom, who lived and died an honest fellow, but, alas! a very wet one.'

The song, which described the funeral, and for which Squire Forester gave the author a

hundred pounds, having been set to music, was sung with enormous success by Charles Incledon, the great ballad singer of the beginning of the last century, and a little company of Shropshire fox-hunters travelled up to Drury Lane to hear it. When Incledon came to the last line,

Tally-ho, hark forward, Tally-ho, Tally-ho,

they were shocked by the lack of the true technique, and so, very properly, took the stage by storm and showed London the real way.

## A SYMPHONY IN BLUE

ANY one', said a forthright lady, 'who does not like blue ought to consult a doctor.' I happen personally to be very fond of this colour, but none the less I thought her view extreme. I know several people who do not like blue and yet have their health and wits and get no abuse from me. We are all different: one of my friends, whose own preference is for yellow—yellow walls, yellow hangings, yellow book-bindings—nearly swooned when I opened the door and she found herself among purple; another wants green, although green has the reputation of being unlucky. 'But everything', she said when I put the case before her, 'is unlucky', and upon my word I believe she's right.

But blue? I cannot set myself in the place of one who is offended by blue, particularly since there are so many shades of it to choose from. In a casual unanalytical way we say blue for every variety of it, but there are so many divisions and sub-divisions that each one should perhaps have its own name. There is the little speed-

well's darling blue and the blue of the Bay of Naples in the posters; there is the blue of the bead casings in which Egyptian mummies were swathed; there is the blue of the little figures that were buried with these mummies; there is the blue of Persian pottery; there is the blue of old Chinese glass vases; there is the blue of the sugar-bird's head and the blue of the king-fisher's back and the blue of the shadows on the snow; there is the blue of the forget-me-not and of love-in-a-mist, of the gentian and of the eye-bright, of the cornflower and of the devil's bugloss, of borage and of the vast delphinium family: a blue often shot through with mauves. There is the gentle blue of the harebell and the hard blue of the lobelia. There is the shimmering blue of chicory as I saw it in great fields in France during the War; there is the blue of the grape-hyacinth among the grass beside Tuscan roads.

But not everything that is described as blue fulfils its promise: when I was in Vienna the beautiful Blue Danube was brown with mud; the Blue Train is blue only by reason of its destination—the *côte d'azur*. The phrase 'the blues' to describe the dumps has never seemed to me a sound one.

There is the blue of the thrush's egg, so gay and sure of itself, of the starling's egg, so pale and irresolute, and the tender blue of the hedge-sparrow's egg; there is the aggressive blue of the wounded British uniform and the smoky

blue of the French army; there is the blue of Oxford and Harrow and the blue of Cambridge and Eton. There is the blue of the Blue Peter and the blue of a blue trout and the blue of the eyes of Miss Elfride Swancourt, of which it is set on record: 'These eyes are blue; blue as autumn distance—blue as the blue we see between the retreating mouldings of hills and woody slopes on a sunny September morning. A misty and shady blue, that had no beginning or surface, and was looked *into* rather than *at*.'<sup>1</sup>

There is the blue of the night seen from a room lighted with electricity. There is the liquid living blue of jewels—the sapphire, the ultramarine, the gercan; there is the cold impenetrable blue of the turquoise. And there is the blue described in the finest piece of literature about a colour that I can recall: Mr. Bain's introduction to his Indian analogue, *A Draught of the Blue*.

Without blue how very different, indeed how unthinkably different, would some of the Old Masters be! Murillo, for instance, to whom the Madonna was constantly sitting. Take blue from Titian's robes and mountains, and what would be left? Take blue from Poussin's skies, and the pictures, for all their fine drawing, would be ordinary. The Barbizon men used blue—usually the blue of the French labourer's jacket or a peasant woman's head-dress—with charming

<sup>1</sup> *A Pair of Blue Eyes*, by Thomas Hardy.

effect. Cotman would have been lost had he forgotten his cobalt. Blue is the life of Whistler's river nocturnes and his Valparaiso series. Nattier gave his name to a shade of it. What could be more lovely than the famous water-colour known as Turner's 'Blue Righi'?

One of my first conscious realizations of blue was in Switzerland, when our driver—this was long before the petrol age set in—insisted on stopping his horse somewhere on the road in order that we might walk through a little odorous pine-wood to visit a lake whose water, looked into from a boat over whose side we leaned, was of the purest blue. Whether this hue came from its depth and clarity or from some physical cause, I cannot say; but probably from an ingredient, for the water of the Silent Pool near Gomshall has a somewhat similar quality. The Blauen See, as I think my Swiss lake was called, must have made a great impression on me, for, although forty-three years have passed, I can reconstruct it now. Had it not been for the stillness and intensity and unreality of its blue, which was more like atmosphere than water, I should have forgotten it.

That was my first momentous association with this divine colour; my latest meeting with an unexpected blaze of it, almost overwhelming in its suddenness and its beauty, was at Winchelsea. I had heard much about the new windows which

in 1931 were unveiled in that nobly spacious church—nobly spacious although only a portion of it remains. These windows, which fill the delicate stone frames of the three great east windows—windows happily out of all the usual proportion to the wall—were designed and executed by Dr. Douglas Strachan for Lord Blanesburgh as a gift to the church in memory of members of the Younger family. I had been told that they were remarkable, but I was not prepared for such a shock of pleasure as I received on entering the west door and being confronted by the prismatic beams that then meet the eyes. At first, although conscious of the transfiguration of the whole wall, one is aware only of the central window, celebrating Praise and Resurrection, which is suffused with an amethystine radiance. Having studied its thoughtful symbolism, which comprises strange ‘visionary horsemen with trumpeters proclaiming energy and spiritual forces of nature’, I turned to the left into the north aisle to see the new window there, and it was then that I was lost in the azure once again. For this design, representing the Birth, with the Madonna and Child in the central light, is of a rich and burning blue. It is blue in detail and blue in the mass. The day was sunny, so that an added effulgence was diffused, every ray of which was blue. Mine eyes were seeing the glory of the coming of the Lord, and the glory was blue.

## THE CINQUE PORTS

THE original Cinque Ports were Hastings, Romney, Hythe, Dover, Sandwich, 'and sometimes', as the grammarians say when they enlarge upon the vowels, Winchelsea and Rye; and I suppose they are Cinque Ports still, although a receding Channel has made some of them look rather foolish. Hastings has its fishing fleet, not so very different to-day as when Turner painted that most beautiful picture, 'Sun rising through vapour', now pitted against Claude in the National Gallery; Dover has a harbour, wholly the work of man and in constant jeopardy from the waves; but Hythe has nothing but an unprotected beach, and Sandwich, Romney, Winchelsea, and Rye have become inland towns. When one learns that Tenterden, on a hill-top in the heart of Kent, sheltering beneath its pinnacled steeple, was once affiliated to the Cinque Ports and had its own haven at Smallhythe, one realizes what pranks the Channel has been playing in the past four hundred years.

In return for their original purpose, which

has vanished—that is to say, to provide ships and men for the Navy and to defend the coast from Seaford in Sussex to Birchington in Kent—the Cinque Ports had many privileges, although it is possible that these may not be generally known. Looking at the cheerful countenances which one observes to-day in Winchelsea and Rye, in Hythe and Sandwich (except, of course, on the links), in Dover, Romney, and Hastings, I cannot believe that they are acutely regretting the loss of such rights as soc and sac, tol and team, blodwit and fledwit, pillory and tumbrel, infangentheof and outfangentheof, to say nothing of mundbryce: all of which their predecessors enjoyed. But the old exemption from tax and tallage might be a boon for which they would now give much; and the right to seize all flotsam, jetsam, and ligan, and keep it as naturally their own property, would be worth having too. Happy days, gone for ever; or until the tide returns and they are ports in earnest once more. ‘No sea, no privileges’, seems to be the rule.

The case of Sandwich is peculiarly hard, for in its hey-day it was a veritable Portsmouth. Before then, however, it had been too conveniently placed for our foes. The Danes made a habit of pillaging it, and later the French. It was at Sandwich that Canute landed in 1016, ultimately to become King of England. It may have been at Sandwich that he gave his courtiers

their lesson, this astute king, a photograph of whose direct descendant I found in one of the illustrated dailies the other day: Master Knut Hamson, representing the twenty-third generation since the Danish marauder. That boy should be watched. In the reign of Edward IV Sandwich was the principal naval and military port in England; it had ninety-five ships manned by 1,500 sailors, and its Custom receipts were £16,000 a year: then no trifle. But the vagaries of the tide altered all this, the harbour was silted up and the town became more and more an inland abode. Were it not that long stretches of grassy dune are favourable to the divagations, caprices, and even, on occasion, obediences of a little white ball, Sandwich would be now a city of the dead. It chanced, however, that in the eighteen-eighties some proficient golfer, casting a perceptive and comprehensive glance over these waste spaces, discerned the greens and bunkers and fairways hidden there, and the famous club of St. George came into being.

Perhaps Romney is the least maritime of all Cinque, or Sept, Ports. Hythe, which sent eleven ships to fight the Spanish Armada, although no vestige of the old harbour is now visible, still has a beach and a sea-walk and that odd water-way the Military Canal; but Romney is innocent of any flirtation with the ocean whatever. There it lies, amid green meadows, a placid village,

entirely surrounded by sheep. The sea is found at its maritime neighbour, Littlestone: a huddle of villas which come to life at week-ends, when caddies emerge from their burrows, and, should it rain, great and gaudy umbrellas are unfurled. But golfers and sheep, desirable objects of the country-side as they may be, are a very long way from bustling havens and the hammering of shipbuilders. The naval glory of Romney has indeed departed.

Of all the Cinque Ports Dover has become most modernized, with its hotels and promenade and boat-trains and cross-Channel service. Dover is, in its centre, intensely urban and of its period. Also, it is still a harbour. Rye and Winchelsea, on the other hand, have remained medieval. It is true that Rye has cinemas and is a mark for the charabanger, and that the inhabitants would seem to subsist chiefly by selling each other curiosities and providing each other with tea; but after business hours it is an abode of peace and antiquity and the most foreign town in England. It is also the most compressed town in England, and the one which puts up the most determined defence to the builder, who must inevitably pull down something before he can erect anything new. Not an inch to spare is there. Very beautiful are the houses now covering the ground, and very beautiful is the latest structure of all, the little white Romanesque

Franciscan chapel which was set up on the site of something old four or five years ago; or brought bodily, from Ravenna, say, on angelic wings such as those that once bore the Holy House to Loreto. If there is a prettier chapel in England than this, I have not seen it.

Rye still has some link with the sea, for the Rother is wide enough for small vessels to come up to the walls and load gravel there; but Winchelsea, its sister, rejoices in inland security. There could not well be more difference than between these two cities on a hill: Rye so compact and self-contained, every house hard against every other house, and Winchelsea open and green. It is probable that one half of Winchelsea, as of Rye, knows how the other half lives, but there is less suggestion of supervision. If ever a sanctuary needed a by-pass it is Winchelsea, for every charabanc to and from Hastings passing through the gate is a menace. This gate is one of three in the old wall, but the wall has crumbled, partly from age and partly because of French attack when the town was a port in being. But the plight of this, the second, Winchelsea, is less unhappy than that of the first, which lies beneath the waves some two miles out. I have not heard, however, whether there is a legend of submerged bells ringing, as at Selsey.

## MARTELLO TOWERS

A S I was driving through the Sheila Kaye-Smith country—which lies between Rye and Hythe—I came across a Martello tower for sale. It was so dilapidated and forlorn that the house-agent, normally so resilient, had thrown up the sponge and retired from the contest. Whatever he may say about it in his advertisements in the papers, he employs no adjectives of allurement on the notice-board fixed to the structure itself. ‘For Sale’ is, when on the spot, as far as he can trust himself. Although I am not a bidder, it is evident from the number of Martello towers which have been turned into residences that they can be made habitable enough: a curious instance of evolution, the fortress of one century becoming the week-end resort of the next. To spend Saturdays-to-Mondays in a stronghold erected by the English to repel the invasion of the dreaded Boney is to be in a very advantageous position when at dinner the subject of *pieds-à-terre* crops up.

The word Martello is a corruption. The real

word was Mortella, for the towers are copies or adaptations of the fort on Cape Mortella in Corsica, which became famous for its resistance in 1794—mortella being the name for a wild myrtle growing lavishly thereabout. The fort on Cape Mortella was first taken by the English when helping the Corsican insurgents against the French in 1793. The French then won it back, but in 1794 the English took it again, yet only with the greatest difficulty and at disproportionate cost of life. The success with which it had held out, and the extent of the damage it had inflicted, made such an impression that our War Office accepted the model of the Mortella stronghold as impregnable—or, if it was not quite so easily satisfied as that, took advantage of the legend of invulnerability when the time came, during the Napoleonic scare, ten years later, to allay the fears of the peasants on the coast of Kent and Sussex. Set a Corsican to repel a Corsican.

If you look out of the windows of the train soon after passing Wimereux towards Paris you will see on the left the Colonne de la Grande Armée, 174 feet high, on the top of which is a bronze figure of Napoleon, while at the foot is the clump of gorse where the impenetrable secret of Nurse Daniels' death could be learned—if only twigs had speech. This French obelisk is closely linked with the Martello towers of England, for it was erected to celebrate the

Emperor's intention, after the Treaty of Amiens, of invading and conquering England when war should break out afresh. Mere intentions are rarely so honoured. Boulogne was his base, and the Armada was to consist of three varieties of flat-bottomed vessels drawing the minimum of water —namely, *prames*, thirty-five metres long and eight wide, carrying eight guns; *chaloups cannonières*, twenty-four metres long by five wide, carrying five guns, and *bâteaux cannonières*, nineteen metres long and less than two wide, carrying two guns. Built all over France and the Netherlands, they were assembled at Boulogne and designed to be propelled across the Channel by oars and beached on the shore between Folkestone and Hastings. That was in 1803 and 1804, the actual day of embarkation being dependent upon the position of British ships, all of whom he was tempting away from home waters by artful baits, and particularly of those immediately under Nelson, whose ability Napoleon did not in the least underrate.

Such was the situation which called, on our side, for the chain of Martello towers.

They are said to have been Pitt's idea and to have been decreed by him when, in 1803, he was in residence at Walmer Castle as the Warden of the Cinque Ports. Like Lord Fisher during a later war, more than a century after, his message, conveyed through the towers, was: 'Sleep safely

in your beds.' Having carefully examined the constituents of a Martello tower—which are chiefly brick and rubble—I cannot believe that, if put to it, they could have done anything to make the Boulogne monument so vainglorious a thing: yet Kent and Sussex thought so. But for their construction the 130,000 Froggies would have landed—so Kent and Sussex believed. What exciting times for the rustics and fishermen—and even more so for their children—while the builders were at work! What important swaggering times for the little garrisons after they were completed! 'Let Boney come—who cares?' Boney, however, did not come; his dreaded Nelson was too much for him. Had the battle of Trafalgar, in 1805, gone otherwise, the towers might have been put tragically to the test; but upon that reverse Napoleon had to revise his policy, and the conquest of England was temporarily shelved.

The Martello tower had, like most new things, a predecessor. In 1538, when England, under the arrogance or caprice of Henry VIII, was in danger of concerted invasion by the armies of King Francis I, of the Emperor Charles V, and of the Pope, and news arrived from Antwerp (very similar to the news from Boulogne three centuries later) of a fleet in readiness, certain fortresses were hastily decreed, the only one of which still standing is Camber Castle, between

Rye and Winchelsea, on the Martello fringe. It is a beautiful relic of old England, as it rises amid the sheep, but it was never more than a symbol of strength: it did no work, or, at any rate, if it served as a warning to the foe, it fired no guns. And it cost £23,000 to build: a much larger sum then than now.

When I made my inspection of the Martello towers, I was in a motor-car. A hundred years ago they were examined by a more indignant traveller than I, and a better writer, from horseback. I mean William Cobbett, in whose *Rural Rides*, 1830, will be found the following jeremiad prompted by Pitt's anti-Boney measures:

'From Dymchurch to Hythe you go on the sea beach, and nearly the same from Hythe to Sandgate, from which last place you come over the hill to Folkestone. But let me look back. Here has been the squandering! Here has been the pauper-making work! Here we see some of these causes that are now sending some farmers to the workhouse and driving others to flee the country or to cut their throats!

'I had baited my horse at New Romney, and was coming jogging along very soberly, now looking at the sea, then looking at the cattle, then the corn, when my eye, in swinging round, lighted upon a great round building, standing upon the beach. I had scarcely had time to think about what it could be, when twenty or thirty others, standing along the coast, caught my eye; and if any one had been behind me, he might have heard me exclaim, in a voice that made my horse bound, "The Martello Towers, by —!" Oh, Lord! To think that I should be destined to behold these monuments of the wisdom of Pitt and Dundas and Perceval! Good God! Here they are, piles of bricks in a circular form about three hundred feet (*guess*) circumference

at the base, about forty feet high, and about one hundred and fifty feet circumference at the top. There is a doorway, about midway up, in each, and each has two windows. Cannons were to be fired from the top of these things, in order to defend the country against the French Jacobins!

'I think I have counted along here upwards of thirty of these ridiculous things, which I dare say cost five, perhaps ten, thousand pounds each; and one of which was, I am told, *sold* on the coast of Sussex, the other day, for two hundred pounds! There is, they say, a chain of these things all the way to Hastings! I dare say they cost millions. But far indeed are these from being all, or half, or a quarter of the squanderings along here. Hythe is half *barracks*; the hills are covered with barracks; and barracks most expensive, most squandering, fill up the side of the hill.

'Here is a canal (I crossed it at Appledore) made for the length of thirty miles (from Hythe, in Kent, to Rye, in Sussex) to *keep out the French*; for those armies who had so often crossed the Rhine and the Danube, were to be kept back by a canal, made by Pitt, thirty feet wide at the most! All along the coast there are works of some sort or other; incessant sinks of money; walls of immense dimensions; masses of stone brought and put into piles. Then you see some of the walls and buildings falling down; some that have never been finished. The whole thing, all taken together, looks as if a spell had been, all of a sudden, set upon the workmen; or, in the words of the Scripture, here is the "*desolation of abomination, standing in high places*". However, all is right. These things were made with the hearty good will of those who are now coming to ruin in consequence of the debt, contracted for the purpose of making these things! This is all *just*. 'The load will come, at last, upon the right shoulders.'

—The sturdy old demagogue! He ought to be living at this hour, when his pen would find provocation even more congenial.

Should the Martello towers have stoutened

the hearts of any of the Sussex folks, they must be said to have been built not in vain; for a marsh-land populace rushing shrieking to the towns would have set a very bad example and might have led to national hysteria. But their day is over, and one by one they are being destroyed or are falling down or are transferred to week-end resorts. In a description in the *Eastbourne Chronicle*, written by the tenant of Tower 64, Langney, there is this passage referring to three Martellos at Eastbourne which were done away with not long since:

'In the very heart and centre of the pillar of each of the destroyed towers was found buried a cannon. Two appeared to be old disused English pieces; the third was a real trophy. Badly, and as if hurriedly cast, it bore the impression of the Phrygian cap of Liberty; and underneath the letters R.F. (*République Française*).

'It had been wrought in the first days of the terrible Republic "One and Indivisible, Liberty, Equality, Fraternity or Death," when France, under Robespierre and Danton, was improvising armaments, and so heroically and successfully rallying on land against the coalized armies of Europe; but struggling all in vain at sea against the immortal and unconquerable English sea-dogs.

'In some sea fight this Republican gun had been captured; and, as if in insolent defiance of the foe, the captors buried it deep in the heart of a Sussex Tower. Remounted on a carriage the gun now stands, enshrined amid flowers, in an Eastbourne garden, surrounded by other cannon dismantled or dug out from the lost Martellos.'

It is probable that the Martello fringe of this little island, at any rate in its rural sections, is

very little changed in character since Cobbett ambled through it. Dover and Folkestone, Eastbourne and Hastings have grown, but the sinister Crumbles, the Pevensey Levels and Romney Marsh must be almost as they were. The little Marsh towns are as quiet, the farms as lonely. The sheep are neither fatter nor leaner, and arrange themselves in the pastures with the same unerring sense of composition; the plovers still gather in their thousands, wheeling from black to white and white to black; smaller flocks of starlings hasten busily across the sky, confident and even audacious in their sense of family security; rooks and gulls still dig in amity in every field; herons, solitary, melancholy and statuesque, peer into the ribbony dykes. The grey square-towered churches sit as solidly on the ground, and, for all the straightening that has gone on elsewhere, the roads of the Marsh still wind as sinuously as the eels beneath the surface of the waters. All that is noticeably new is the railway that brings Appledore and Rye, Dungeness and Romney a little nearer to each other, the toy railway from Hythe to Littlestone, the prevalence of bungalows, motors instead of horses, and the golfers who plod with such purpose and gravity over the Littlestone links. As for the Dymchurch fairies, they had flitted long before Cobbett's day, as the works of Mr. Kipling make abundantly clear.

## SO NEAR AND YET SO FAR

SEVERAL years ago I used to know an artist—he was in fact a neighbour in the country—whose simple unworldly ways were at once a legend and a joke. He carried his natural absentmindedness to a point beyond that which his more sophisticated brothers of the brush can, for their self-protection, affect. He forgot everything; he forgot his collar, his tobacco-pouch; he forgot to answer letters; he forgot to eat his meals. But nobody minded; he was forgiven all because he was so sweet, so transparent; in fact he was a visitant from another sphere. He differed also from many other artists in being a water-drinker and a very fine sure draughtsman.

It is years since I saw him or, which is more strange, any of his work, for, although I no longer visit his part of the country, I go to many art exhibitions. His pictures were in the pastoral manner, a little in the line of Jean François Millet and Bastien Lepage, lucid, severe and drenched with sincerity.

The other day, at a railway-station, I had one of those sudden encounters with an old acquaintance known to both of us. He was hastening to the train and I was coming from it, but I just had time to ask after my long-lost painter and receive a reply. It was—

‘Poor old Mark?’ he said. ‘All to pieces!’ and was gone.

This was bad news, and I pondered on it at odd moments in perplexity. That Mark, of all men, should go ‘all to pieces’! That clean-living temperate soul, with his few wants, his disdain of civilization and its lures, his nearness to earth, the life he led almost coexistent with the course of the sun! Still, odd things happen. Temptations are varied and swift. Artists are the first to suffer when money is short. The Budget. . . .

Yesterday, however, I got to the bottom of the mystery. I met another ghost from the past whom I had known at the same time as Mark and who knew him still; was in fact his closest friend.

‘What is this I hear about Mark?’ I asked. ‘Terrible. Who could have thought it possible?’

‘Oh, I don’t know,’ he said. ‘It’s not so bad as that. After all, he was always a bit of a mystic, wasn’t he? and the step to religion is a short one. . . .’

‘Religion!’ I exclaimed. ‘I don’t follow you.’

'Oh, I thought you'd heard,' he said. 'Mark's given up landscape and his old work entirely.'

'Then what does he paint now?' I asked.

'Altar-pieces,' he said.

## PHASES OF THE NATIVITY

### I. PAINTER-ARCHITECTS

THERE is to be read almost any day in the advertisements in *The Times* Personal Columns a phrase that always puzzles me. It is used to describe the more desirable houses which the advertisers are anxious to transfer to other people. Whereas ordinary houses are just houses, these special ones are 'architect-planned'. What then of the others? How do they come into being? I suppose either through the base instrumentality of some builder or builder's assistant so ignoble and ignominious that even the word architect is too extravagant for him, or—worse still—they are erected from the designs of the owner himself. I say 'worse still' because, without any inner knowledge of the subject, it is my conviction that a man who designs his own house is, among architects, a creature past redemption.

And yet we may write our own books without incurring the enmity of professional authors,

compose our own melodies unattacked by professional musicians, and paint our own pictures and still be amiably welcomed both by the Old Guard and by Cubists. Why is it that the architect—also, as we know, an alleged artist and even eligible for the R.A.—is so implacable?

'We may paint our own pictures'—those words bring me to my real theme, which is not the crabbed nature of professional designers of buildings, but the examination and comparison of certain structures in which they had no hand. I refer to the representations by the Old Masters of that historic stable in the inn-yard at Bethlehem where, on December 25, nineteen hundred and thirty-two years ago, the infant Christ was born. Of the actual edifice we have no record, nothing beyond the testimony of St. Luke that there being 'no room for them in the inn' the child was laid in a manger. But probably no building has been more often re-created imaginatively by pencil and brush. Latterly, it is true, artists, no longer under Church patronage, have been more attracted by the Chelsea Power House and Corfe castle; but no matter how they may rove for subjects, the number of pictures of the Bethlehem manger can now never be superseded by representations of any other structure.

The charge which the authors of short stories and serials have always brought against their illustrators—that they haven't read the text—is

only too well founded in the case of the Old Masters and the Nativity. A few were conscientious, notable among them the blessed Fra Angelico, who invariably subordinated himself and made the glory of God his one purpose. Other of the Primitives saw to it that their mangers were of the humblest: nothing but sheds or pent-houses, with the ox and the ass within, diffusing benevolence, and the Holy Family at the entrance, Mary marvellously recovered from her pains. If you go to the National Gallery you will find examples both of humility and grandiose ornateness—the whole range from plain Pacchiorotto ('who worked in distemper') to the sumptuous Caliari. The Outhouse or Lean-to School, as we may call these uncomplicated hands, who even if they have forgotten the inn have never lost sight of the poverty and simplicity of the scene, is perhaps best represented by Brother Angelico in No. 582, where, although there is nothing but a hut, that most friendly and happy of painters has sown wild flowers all about; by Masaccio or a pupil (No. 3648), who has built only a shed; by Bonifazio, No. 1160, whose outhouse is almost credible; by Parenzo (No. 3336) who gives the Holy Family no protection, whatever and has depicted the least resigned of all the Josephs; by Piero della Francesca, No. 908, who has set up the most elementary shed, but spreads contentment over all; and by Botticelli, No. 1034, who

has made use of a contiguous rock, such as is very unlikely to have been found in a Bethlehem inn-yard, but is scrupulous about the thatching. Luca Signorelli in No. 1133 goes far beyond Botticelli, for he sets the scene in a cave, among surroundings as different from those of an inn —unless it had what are oddly known as pleasure grounds—as could be imagined.

It is strange how completely the inn has been ignored. The fact that it was overcrowded so that guests had to be accommodated in the out-buildings ought to have appealed to the artist; but artists rarely do what one expects from them. Old Bruegel is the only painter I can remember who crowds the place at all; and with him such thoughtfulness is natural, for he was a realist. There is the National Gallery example with its vein of satire, where Joseph is being reminded by a sly whispering friend that, should he care to turn an honest penny as a showman, he has ample material; but I was thinking at the moment more particularly of the Old Bruegel at the Ryks Museum in Amsterdam, where his historical sense runs away with him, for not only does he make the inn-yard a scene of bustle, but he has covered it with a foot of snow, just as he would have seen on any December 25th in Holland but very improbably in Palestine.

So far I have been dealing with artists content to illustrate and not to shine as architects; but

there are others. There are the splendid fellows who, while condescending to paint the humble occupants of the stable, were hopeful that a millionaire seeing the picture might realize that they were just the men to design him a palace too. What a noble residence for a gentleman Vincenzo Foppa could have built, you can see by looking at No. 729. No poverty-stricken Bethlehem here. See in No. 2790 how Mabuse refused to adhere to the New Testament. And in No. 1079 even the piety of Gerard David could not keep him to the point, but in the background he must erect a charming northern medieval city, where I, for one, would very gladly live or wander. As an attractive town-planner David stands very high. Yet Paul Caliari, the Veronese, is pre-eminently the painter-architect to whom Sir Georgius Midas, desiring an ostentatious abode, would go. In No. 268 this abundant craftsman is so eager to show what he can do on the grand scale that you have some difficulty in finding the Holy Family at all.

But when it comes to ingenious architecture the master is Crivelli, who not only built nobly, but forgot nothing. His only Nativity in the National Gallery is a section of the predella in No. 724, where the Holy Family are lodged as they should be, in an outhouse; it is in No. 739 that we see him at work on a real habitable structure, the home of the Virgin at the time of

the Annunciation, where such was the thoughtfulness—more than thoughtfulness, prevision—of this most competent architect-painter or painter-architect, that he constructed in the solid masonry of the wall a passage-way through which the Holy Spirit might, when the time arrived, enter. Few architects of our time, practical and labour-saving as they are, would have been so long-sighted. We know that there were architects—or at any rate that there was one architect—in heaven long before Crivelli, for we have the testimony of Christ: ‘In my Father’s house are many mansions.’ But I feel sure that Crivelli, on his death, was added to the staff.

## II. THE OX AND THE ASS

EVERYONE who is familiar with the Old Masters' treatment of the Nativity, especially the earlier and simpler painters, such as Fra Angelico and Fabriano, has been amused by the attitude of the ox and the ass: their blend of benevolence, piety, and surprise. A French writer, M. Jules Supervielle, has been amused too; but he has done more than merely smile, he has analysed the thoughts and feelings of these good companions, and the result is a short story, included in his recent book, *L'Enfant de la Haute Mer*, which has given me more pleasure than anything I have read in French for a long while. It has a quality all its own, as I will endeavour to make clear.

We see very quickly that the ox and the ass were of different characters. Both were true and solicitous, but the ass was far more self-satisfied and even querulous; it was the humble ox who was wholly self-sacrificing, who questioned and wondered, and who, when an angel entered the manger to paint a halo round the heads of the

Child, of its mother and its father, sadly recognized that his own brow had not deserved one. Yet in the end, did it not? The kind anxious creature was overjoyed when Mary let him cherish the Child with his warmth and she thanked him for it; but his pleasure was lessened by the fear that he might do something clumsy with his horns, and thus cause an injury. ‘How difficult’, he reflected, ‘everything has suddenly become!’ The ass rather too eagerly supported him in his depreciation of horns, pointing out how much more comforting to an infant’s hands were long, soft ears such as his own. ‘They are just the thing to reassure him,’ he said, ‘and they will not only occupy him, they will instruct him.’ The ox could not but agree; yet, a little piqued, he added a warning to the ass not to forget himself and bray in the Child’s face. ‘Peasant!’ replied the ass.

The ox, however, scored more often than not. One day, for instance, while Mary, at the door, was answering the thousand questions put to her by the future Christians, the ass took it on himself to move the Child, so that Mary received a terrible shock when for a moment, looking round, she failed to see it. While the ass was being told never to be so interfering again, ‘the ox approved by a silence of exceptional quality. He knew how to give to his muteness a rhythm, light and shade, punctuation.’ The two crea-

tures, however, were willing to sink their rivalry for the common good: they united to cast a shadow when the sun was too hot for the Child, and whenever a strange noise was heard without, the ass barred the door and the ox ranged himself alongside to strengthen the defence. The ass was always the less subtle, the less thoughtful. It was the ox who had the honour, with an arrangement of straw, of preparing the first chapel, and such was his joy as a servitor that he neither ate nor drank, in order that he might subdue his grossness and be the more fit for his honoured position. He was delighted when the Child played laughingly with his great muzzle and Mary approved. 'Everybody ought to be happy in this little household,' thought the ox; 'I never saw a mother more sweet or a Child more beautiful; and yet, and yet, now and then, how grave they look!'

When the Three Kings arrived the ox became increasingly vigilant. At first he didn't like the black one at all; but when this monarch, who was a trifle short-sighted, stooped down to see the Child better, and the reflection of the little Jesus shone in the polished ebony of his face, the ox's suspicions disappeared. 'He's the only one who could effect that,' he thought. A little later he added, 'He's the best of the three.' When the kings slept side by side on a bench without removing their heavy jewelled crowns

he was greatly surprised. 'More uncomfortable even than horns,' he thought. The Three Kings woke simultaneously at dawn, and in unison left. When they had gone, both the ox and the ass prayed to their new Lord. The ox was all humility; having apologized for his horns, he besought a little of the Child's delicacy of texture, and, with the constant awareness of his clumsiness and want of grace, expressed willingness to stand aside for a helper more to the Child's fancy. The ass was less unselfish, he even went so far in his prayer as to draw attention to the fact that the ox was as capable of carrying weights as himself, and asked for his own hoofs to be made larger, his tail more hairy, and his voice softened.

By the intercession of the ox and the ass, representatives of all the other animals were permitted to come in single file and make obeisance to the Child. Even the venomous insects were welcomed; even the snakes, who, it was observed, had the tact not to look at the Virgin at all and to move as far as possible from her. The lion's carnivorous taste led to a little uneasiness, but he assured them that he ate his fellow-creatures only when forced to by hunger, and that he would be a vegetarian if the diet agreed with him instead of always giving him indigestion. The giraffe contented himself with placing his forefeet in the doorway. The elephant advanced his

trunk and waved it as though swinging a censer. The sheep insisted on being shorn, and left his fleece as an offering. The kangaroo made every effort to give the infant Jesus one of the little ones from her pouch, but Joseph, whose attitude throughout was one of some perplexity, refused to allow it. The ostrich 'profited by a moment of inattention' to lay an egg secretly in a corner. This was discovered the next morning by the ass, whereupon Joseph, being a practical man, at once made an omelette of it. The fish, owing to their inability to live out of water, sent a seagull as their delegate. Only one accident marred the harmony of this remarkable gathering. Joseph, who at the end of the day was more tired than usual, put his foot on a spider who was in the midst of making its homage to the Child: an accident which had its repercussions, because when Joseph made an effort to rid the place of flies, they protested that they belonged there, and he, having become a little unsure of himself with insects, had to comply.

The end is sad, perhaps needlessly so. Herod's proclamation against the children caused Joseph quickly to saddle the ass once more, to move to a place of safety. The ox (or shall I call him, as M. Supervielle does, the beef?) having fasted so long, was not strong enough to go too, but neither Joseph nor Mary had the courage to tell him so, pretending they were merely taking a

little ramble, and would return at once. 'The night is beautiful,' said the Virgin in the ox's hearing: 'it will do the child good. He is a little pale these days.' 'That's true,' said Joseph. It was a white lie, as the beef knew, but, being the soul of kindness and consideration, he agreed, and in his turn feigned sleep so that he need not be aware of their departure. When a neighbour entered the next morning he had passed away.

The poor beef! No one having read this story can ever look again at an ox in a Nativity picture, or even at an ox in a field, without sympathy, pity, and pride.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> But the beneficent activities of the beef did not end there. In a sequel entitled 'La Fuite en Egypte,' printed in *La Nouvelle Revue Française* for May, 1932, M. Supervielle shows how the disembodied spirit of this gentle friendly creature continued to minister to the Holy Family, and even, under Heaven, to be their protector and the saviour of the Child.

## ST. GEORGE

PASSING through Maidstone recently, I was struck by the excellence of the St. George and Dragon on a war memorial on the main street, at the junction of the London road and the Tonbridge road. The saint sculptured there is a real warrior; the dragon was worth killing, which is not always the case, because too often this dread adversary is no more than an aggressive or obstructive lizard. Defective imagination on the part of the artist can be shown, too, in the saint's weapon. In the representation on the gold sovereign which (oddly enough) lies before me as I write, St. George, stark naked on his horse, is threatening the dragon with a broadsword or dagger so short that it could not possibly reach it; and were it not for the hoofs of a steed far more intelligent than himself, St. George would have no chance. The same design is repeated twice in sovereign size, I find, on the current pound note; all the earlier ones used to give the whole space to it, and the weapon was then a spear, as I think it

should be. A broadsword for the severance of the horrid head, but a spear to pierce and slay. The spear was the late Sir Bertram McKinnel's design in the Bradbury days; it is Mr. B. G. Catterus who signs the notes now and has reverted to the inadequate implement which so annoyed Ruskin. For ten shillings we get no hint of the incident at all.

St. George, according to the historians and hagiologists, is a figure not easy to identify. The weight of opinion decides that he was a Cappadocian by birth and became an officer in the army of Diocletian. When that Emperor began to persecute the Christians George protested, and, refusing to obey orders, was, on April 23, 303, beheaded at Nicodemia in Asia Minor, a town situated on an inlet of the Sea of Marmora. There is a legend that he visited England, but no verification can be obtained. He was not adopted as our patron saint until the reign of Edward III, thus replacing Edward the Confessor, and we share him with Portugal and Aragon, while Venice and Genoa are also under his care. Why England should not have a saint all to herself I fail to understand. The case is complicated by the circumstance that the French village of Le Maine used to claim the possession of his relics, and may still do so, and many miracles were performed by them. The Mohammedans identify him with Elijah.

As for the dragon, whom the Mohammedans confuse with Dagon, its evolution is very curious. St. George, it is generally agreed by the unromantic people who write about the Early Church, met and killed none. ‘The popular legend of St. George and the Dragon is, of course, fabulous,’ says one. ‘Of course’ is very offensive. Why of course? Are we to give up also St. Lawrence’s gridiron, St. Catherine’s wheel, St. Jerome’s lion? Is there not the testimony of the good red gold, forgetting for the moment the inadequate dagger? And Mr. Catterus’s two medallions? The origin of the myth, say the pedants, is the circumstance that the martyr’s shrine was erected at Lydda, which is near the spot associated with the story of Perseus and Andromeda. Perseus was a beautiful youth who liberated Andromeda by killing a sea monster, and how natural, say the wiseacres, for the new hero of the country-side to be fused with the old!

The best of what might be called the fairy-tale treatment of St. George and the Dragon in paint is, I suppose, Carpaccio’s sequence of wall paintings at the little church of St. Giorgio degli Schiavoni in Venice. In the first picture you see the hero in full tilt, spear almost horizontal, advancing upon the foe, while the skulls and bones of its victims are scattered about; but although the onset is so terrific and the weapon so truly lethal, the saint did not then kill. Accord-

ing to the story as told in the *Golden Legend*, the dragon had been ravaging the Libyan desert and carrying off victims. At first the monster was placated with sheep, but the supply of sheep failing, boys and girls had to be substituted, and in course of time it was the fate of the King's daughter to be sent forth. As she was faltering towards her doom St. George chanced to come that way, and, either taken by her beauty and distress or filled with spiritual fervour, swore to save her and the city in Jesus Christ His name. This explains why a princess so often figures in pictorial representations. The turn which Carpaccio gives the story, always in accordance with Caxton's version, is to make the dragon subdued and not yet slaughtered, so that in the next picture we can see it being led meekly into the city with the princess's girdle round its neck. Not until St. George had made the populace promise that if it were killed they would be baptized, did he administer the *coup de grâce*.

Venice is a long way off; the National Gallery is near, and St. George and the Dragon make several appearances there. Perhaps the best version, or at any rate the most spirited, is that by Crivelli, another Venetian, in the predella of one of his very entertaining altar-pieces: No. 724. Here the saint, having already impaled the dragon with a short sword, is hacking at it with a long one, while Her Royal Highness, in red, surveys

the scene. Pisano, in No. 776, provides the saint with a straw hat of enormous dimensions. The dragon, vanquished and defunct, is at his feet and his horse behind him. Crivelli gives the dragon wings and a tail, but Memling, in No. 686, represents it as a species of seal with its throat cut. The most dramatic National Gallery version is Tintoretto's—No. 16—where St. George charges at the dragon on the edge of a cliff (a hint of Perseus here), the dragon being a worthy adversary, while the princess, plump and distraught, fills the foreground. At the back rises a vast and sombre castle.

Fortunately a romantic tradition will always be stronger than a realistic theory, and our sculptors and painters will, I trust, continue to take the legend of St. George and the Dragon as truth and give it new shape. The Maidstone version cannot be more than a few years old; the St. George and Dragon, high on the point of a spire at St. Rémy en l'Eau, which you see from the Calais line about an hour after leaving Paris, just before reaching St. Just, are recent too. This shows that the sculptors still know their duty. And is there not in the Duke of Clarence's tomb at Windsor, in a tributary of the chapel of St. George, the lovely figure modelled by Alfred Gilbert? That is one of the most beautiful works of any English sculptor, and it could not exist had the dryasdusters had their way.

## THE MAN WITH FORTY-SEVEN FRIENDS

WE have all seen series of mural paintings representing the most noteworthy or most illustratable deeds of one heroic figure—such as those at Blenheim in honour of the great Marlborough, and those in the Louvre, by Rubens, celebrating the glories of Marie de Medicis. But to find a room dedicated in this way to the friends of one single man is new; new, at any rate, to me, although the room in question has been in existence in London for many, many years, during two of which I was every day only a few yards distant and although I have a peculiar interest in some of the portraits. So late can we come to things! Nor should I have come to the room now had it not been for Sir William Rothenstein's reminiscences, where it is mentioned, and the American friend who urged me to visit it.

The room is the lecture-room, once the dining-room, of University Hall in Gordon Street, and the man thus honoured is Henry Crabb Robinson, Lamb's 'Old Crabb', whose portrait is at one

end, a marble bust of him at the other, and round the walls no fewer than forty-seven life-size and full-length representations of his friends, English, French, and German, ranging from Charles and Mary Lamb to Arthur Hugh Clough and Mme de Staël. I call them life-size, but I fancy they are rather above it—Lamb certainly is, if the descriptions of his frail form (I quote Mr. Charles Tween's testimony earlier in this book) are accurate—and not only are they all of commanding height, but all are robust and vigorous, as scholars and poets, philosophers and divines too often cannot be; and all appear to me of much the same age, although, of course, there were wide differences, Samuel Rogers, for instance, being far older than R. H. Hutton of the *Spectator*, and Goethe than James Martineau. But it was perhaps wise of the artist to choose a favourable mean of health and years and subordinate them all to it, for these frescoes are not realistic but symbolical, almost as though a company of the bland and blest in Paradise were the theme.

As for the painter, who includes himself in the last and youngest group, it was Edward Armitage, R.A., whom I remember seeing as a very old man in his house in St. John's Wood, and who was almost my first artist by reason of his picture of Samson struggling with the lion which used to hang high in the Brighton Museum: a building otherwise notable to me for its mosaic portrait

of the First Gentleman in Europe, whose stables, now the Dome, were hard by, and, upstairs, for the clock with all its wonderful works on view and the Willett collection of historical jugs and mugs and pictorial plates. Since Armitage decorated University Hall at his own expense some years after most of the people depicted were dead, I am wondering where he got his likenesses from, for only a few of them were in time to be photographed or even daguerreotyped. Some, of course, he could himself have known, for he was born in 1817 and thus was seventeen when Lamb died, and fifty when, at the age of ninety-one, Crabb Robinson at last relinquished a world in which he was so happy; but for most of them he would have had to work from other portraits.

It is given to few men to have forty-seven friends of any kind, and fewer to have forty-seven friends of such intellectual distinction and eminence as these; but I know of no other instance where they have been painted round the walls of one room. I must give their names, just to put on record so remarkable a group and so remarkable an achievement. But first a word on 'Old Crabb' himself, whose manuscript diary, which I have perused, is the principal treasure of the Dr. Williams Library, preserved in neighbouring rooms. Robinson, the son of a tanner, who, like Ouida, was born at Bury St. Edmunds but, unlike her, has no memorial there, began as a

journalist, being one of the first foreign correspondents of *The Times*. Afterwards he became an advocate, and retired as soon as he had amassed a competence, saying that the two wisest deeds in his life were going to the Bar and, in 1828, leaving it. His leisure thereafter he devoted to travel, talk, amity, and good works. But for his interest in the students of University College, which he helped to found, there would be no University Hall.

Crabb Robinson, though a lawyer, a collector of serious intellects and an undefeatable debater, could not intimidate Lamb, two of whose most elvish letters were written to him. Possibly the circumstance that the two men were exact contemporaries made the association easier. The first letter in the correspondence was dated March 12, 1808; the last to be preserved was of 1832. It was good-humouredly to torment Robinson, when racked by rheumatism or lumbago, that Lamb drew up that famous list of agonies in April, 1829; and the account of Randal Norris's death, which I quote earlier in this book, was written to him.

Robinson was chosen out of all Lamb's friends for the triumphant message on March 29, 1825: 'I have left the d . . . d India House for Ever! Give me great joy', and when, in 1822, Lamb and Miss Lamb and Miss Lamb's attendant, Miss James, went to Paris for a week or so,

Robinson went too. But for Robinson's diary we should not know that Lamb, when there, and, as so many English travellers are, being hungry at about eleven in the morning, ordered in a café, in his best French, a boiled egg, and was served instead with a glass of brandy. This so enchanted him that he spent much of the rest of his time in Paris in ordering eggs.

Now for the seven-and-forty just ones. They begin, just inside the door on the left, with Coleridge, Mary Lamb (for whose well-being, after her brother's death, Robinson made himself largely responsible), Charles Lamb, Southey, Wordsworth (depicted as too old, with white whiskers), William Blake (whom Robinson never tired of extolling, and whom Lamb, who also admired him, mistakenly called Robert), and Flaxman the sculptor, many of whose works, in the Flaxman Gallery at University College, were Robinson's gift. The corresponding group on the other side of the door is German, comprising Von Knebb, Tieck, Goethe, Arndt, Schiller, Herder, and Wieland. Before Carlyle and after William Taylor of Norwich, it was Crabb Robinson who did more than any Englishman to introduce the German thinkers and poets to this country's attention. Now for some more Englishmen: William Hazlitt, very like a parson; William Godwin, in a cape; Thomas Clarkson, W. S. Landor, and Gilbert Wakefield,



MARY AND CHARLES LAMB

*From the fresco of Edward Armitage, R.A., in University Hall, London*

present among whom is Mrs. Barbauld, one of the trinity that Lamb called the three bald women, the others being Mrs. Inchbald and Mrs. Baldwin, the name taken by Mrs. Godwin when she published Lamb's books for children.

The only other female intellects represented in the room are Mme de Staël, the Duchess Amalia, who are found in a group completed by Schlegel and Savigny, and Lady Byron, who, though surrounded by a very mixed assemblage of what now would be called highbrows, does not seem in the least overawed. They comprise Edward Irving, the galvanic preacher, whose Catholic Apostolic church is only a few yards away in Gordon Square; Samuel Rogers, the banker-poet or poet-banker (no, banker-poet); Edward Quillinan, the friend of Wordsworth; Lord Cranworth, the judge; Sir T. N. Talfourd, the biographer of Lamb; the Rev. F. W. Robertson 'of Brighton'; Dr. Arnold, headmaster of Rugby; Ambrose Poynter, the architect; and the Chevalier Bunsen. Finally, there are a number of publicists and divines, of several of whom I have no knowledge: the Rev. P. Le Breton, James Haywood, J. P. Heywood, J. Thorneley, E. W. Field, W. S. Cookson, James Martineau, W. B. Carpenter, A. H. Clough, the poet, R. H. Hutton, J. L. Taylor, E. Beesly, and, No. 47, Armitage, the painter, shyly escaping to a corner.

And why were they painted round the walls

## THE GOLDEN ORIOLE

**I**T was while sitting in supreme but rewarded idleness beside a French river that I first realized that what the Golden Oriole says is 'Cœur de Lion'. There is no doubt about it. Sometimes a single note (the boxwood flute under water) which I cannot associate with any one word, English or French; and sometimes, chuckling with liquid mellowness, 'Cœur de Lion'. Not previously, I believe, has the English royal champion of the Cross been associated with this musical bird; but that is only because there has been no one to relate the incident. How Maurice Hewlett came to omit it from his fine novel *Richard Yea and Nay* would be a mystery if that spirited chronicler were not always more concerned with the emotions than with ornithology. The Scottish King Bruce was helped to success by the insignificant spider; why should not our own gallant King, in trouble in the Holy Land, have been saved from disaster or assisted to victory by the oriole's voice, now here, now there: 'Cœur de Lion', 'Cœur de Lion'?

Whether the Golden Oriole sheds his light on Palestine I cannot say for certain; but I think it highly probable, because I have heard him both in France and in the Dutch East Indies, and the Holy Land lies between. If I have never heard him in England, it is because the local sportsman has been too quick with the trigger. Whatever orioles are to be seen in England, whither they have been so foolish as occasionally to fly, are stuffed. ‘A Rare Visitant’ is the ordinary heading of the sportsman’s letter when, a few moments afterwards, he lays down the gun and takes proudly to the pen. ‘Sir,—Yesterday I was so fortunate as to secure a fine specimen of the Golden Oriole (*Oriolus galbula*), which had probably been driven by the recent gale across the Channel to these hospitable shores.’

The climate and conditions of England are not so different from those of France as are those of the East Indies; so we can only suppose that it is our welcoming salvoes that have depressed the bird. In any case I must take a ticket for his companion in hue, the Golden Arrow, if I am to be sure of hearing his delicious bubbling cry, which, uttered always in a leafy cavern, has some of the effect of music played on a sounding-board. ‘*Cœur de Lion*,’ ‘*Cœur de Lion*.’

It was during the War, on the Marne, that I heard him first, mingling his notes with distant guns or adjacent aeroplanes; and it was a change

indeed from those conditions, and a surprise, to find him in the tropics: in Sumatra, amid mountains as high as four thousand feet, undismayed by the proximity of a volcano and the steady fumes from a sulphur bed; and in Java among the branches of the trees in an hotel garden, in the midst of a populous city level with the sea. Of the many birds in the Dutch East Indies the oriole was the only one I had met in a state of freedom; for, of course, the Java sparrow, which is everywhere, is not the sparrow of England and France. Nor is our sparrow a guest there. In no Batavian bird-cage is he an honoured captive, whereas his little pink-beaked cousin of Java is to be found in his thousands in confinement here. And he always looks happy.

So romantic a King as Richard of the Lion-heart might well have another legend or two. The story of Blondel, the wandering minstrel, tracing his place of imprisonment and bringing about his ransom, belongs to Cœur de Lion's post-Crusade career. Sir Walter Scott in *Ivanhoe* and *The Talisman* invests him with glory as the foe of Saladin and the hero of the deliverance of Jaffa; but the Wizard of the North, for all his wizardry, seems to have known nothing about the Golden Oriole's part in the great struggle.

Let me be the historian.

If ever a King had a good angel in the shape of a bird it was he. On that occasion, greatly risking,

Richard had strayed in disguise into Ascalon—or was it Acre?—to reconnoitre, and, lost in the city's dark ways and surrounded by foes who, if they had known his identity, would have torn him to pieces, was guided through the labyrinth to his own tent outside the walls by the sound of his name uttered mysteriously in the night sky: ‘*Cœur de Lion!*’ ‘*Cœur de Lion!*’ Or so I like to think.

This is, of course, the converse of the well-authenticated story which tells how the Saracen maiden who was betrothed to Gilbert Becket during another Crusade made her way to London with but one wish in her heart and but two words of English on her lips: the wish being to rejoin her lover and the words being ‘Becket, London’. Even as she passed through Cheapside calling those names, so did the oriole fly over Ascalon—or was it Acre?—calling ‘*Cœur de Lion!*’. And how natural for the bird, in his pride, never to have changed his cry!

But even though no new historical facts come to light, doing nothing by a river, whether in England or France, is an enchanting pastime. Something is always happening. Fish jump; strange objects float down with the current; water-rats swim from bank to bank; water-boatmen provide object-lessons in the art of eternally striving and never making any progress. These are, indeed, the least accomplishing of insects. The

ants that one occasionally meets are always being practical, with a definite goal; the positions of gnats in their little nebulæ change; bees are with purposefulness and pollen packed; daddy-long-legs cover a deal of ground and do not retrace their steps; mosquitoes sting. But what does the water-boatman? Nothing but skim against the stream, float back, and skim against the stream once more. A curious, insane, and charmed life. And, if like his brethren on the banks of the Volga, he is singing a song the while, it is inaudible.

Once, and once only, in all the hours I sat there, came the azure flash that we call a kingfisher: the kingfisher who, when Noah (according to French folk-lore) liberated the birds from the Ark, got away first and was thus able to stain his breast for ever with the red burnishings of the setting sun and for ever to carry on his back the reflection of the blue zenith.

## NOTE

Most of the foregoing essays appeared originally in *Punch* and the *Sunday Times*, and are collected here by kind permission of the proprietors of those papers. In many cases they have been much extended. 'The Last to call him Charley' and 'Painter-Architects' are reprinted respectively from *Life and Letters* and *Architectural Design and Construction*.

E. V. L.

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